

Class PS 1102

Book B&L3

1911



A Play in Four Acts

THE LADY BERTHA'S
HONEY-BROTH

Founded on Dumas' Story of the Same Name

283

869

BY
JAMES VILA BLAKE

CHICAGO
THE PRYOR PRESS

1911

PS 1102
B943
1911

COPYRIGHT, 1911
BY
JAMES VILA BLAKE



© C. D. 28015

THE LADY BERTHA'S HONEY-BROTH

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

COUNT OSMOND, Seventy years old in the First Act.

LADY BERTHA, Osmond's Wife, in whose line the title to the Castle and Lands of Wistgaw descends.

FRITZ, the Steward, Fifty years old in the First Act.

ROLLO, the Gardener.

GRUN, the Nurse, Rollo's Wife after the First Act.

HERMAN, a Child four years old in the First Act, Grandson of Osmond and Bertha, afterward known for a time as Torald.

BARON WILBOLD, for a time in possession of Wistgaw. His own Castle and Estate is Eisenfelds.

HILDA, Wilbold's Daughter, Twenty years of age.

THE CHEVALIER HANS, of Althausen.

KOHLIBRAN, King of the Kobolds.

YOHÖ, Kohlibran's Jester.

Workmen, Farm-hands, Servants, Kobolds, Knights and Ladies.

SCENE, the Castle of Wistgaw, in the upper Rhine country, Germany.

TIME, early in Sixteenth Century. Twenty years elapse between the First and Second Acts.

THE LADY BERTHA'S HONEY-BROTH

ACT I—SCENE 1.

SCENE—At the Castle of Wistgaw. The foreground is a lawn of the Castle park. Shrubbery in the rear. In the right middle distance is the front of a stately castle, nearly finished, lacking two or three courses of stone on the turrets. The park continues to right of castle and behind it. In the far background, middle, is a high wooded hill. At the extreme right front stands a sturdy tree, and at the left, not so far front, is also a very large tree encircled by a rustic seat. Late afternoon of early summer.

Before curtain rises is heard men's chorus:

Tell me the time o' the day,
Tell over, tell over, tell over!
Tell me the time 'o the night,
Tell over, tell over, tell over!
The time o' day
When work's at height,
The time o' night
When work's away—
Tell over, tell over, tell over!

As the stanza closes the curtain rises, showing a large number of workmen busy building the castle; the stage is littered with tools, building stones, etc., including a rigging fixed on the castle for hoisting stone. The heavy front door lies on its length against the tree in the right front. The workmen continue singing two more stanzas, working as they sing the next stanza, and stopping to rest as they sing the last stanza, but remaining grouped just as they are when they cease work:

Tell me the workman's song,
Tell over, tell over, tell over!
Tell me the baron's life,
Tell over, tell over, tell over!
 The workman's song
 Of child and wife,
 The baron's life
 In castle strong,
Tell over, tell over, tell over!

Here's to the lord and the man,
Tell over, tell over, tell over!
Here's to the man and the lord,
Tell over, tell over, tell over!
 The man and soil,
 And lady and lord,
 And plenty stored
 Of wine and oil,
Tell over, tell over, tell over!

As the song ends, the men gradually come down front.

FIRST W. I say, bully fellow, there's some work for *you*.

SECOND W. What's that?

FIRST W. Why, you make songs, they say.

SECOND W. Oh, some rhymes now and then.

FIRST W. Well, add a verse or two to that song: there's more to be sung than lord and peasants.

SECOND W. Ay? What?

FIRST W. There are strange doings hereabout—in our work on the castle.

THIRD W. Ay, you may say that, indeed! Do

stones and mortar lift themselves up and lay themselves yonder? Tell me that, now!

FOURTH W. Hush, masters! Softly! Who knows how they be listening?

FIRST W. They? Who?

THIRD W. The things, whatever they be, who work here at night.

FOURTH W. We've all seen it, in the morning.

FIRST W. Ay! but all feared to speak of it.

FIFTH W. I was here first this morning, and I'll show you what I found.

The workman goes to a bush and from under it draws forth a finely made small wheelbarrow.

FIFTH W. This little barrow lay alongside the the big stone we got up onto the turret this noon. Look at it, mates! Did ye ever see the like in a bit of ebony and ivory?

The barrow is passed from hand to hand, and examined curiously, but taken and held timorously, and with hushed murmurs and much looking about.

FIFTH W. Now, what I want to know, is how the barrow came here and who's been working here.

Enters Rollo, unseen by the workmen, and stands looking at them.

FOURTH W. Perhaps 'tis the devil and his imps.

FIRST W. Why not angels?

FOURTH W. Oh! devils come faster than angels.

FIRST W. Tut, man! That's as you may happen to be.

ROLLO. What are you doing? I heard you singing. That's lazy. Better work.

When Rollo speaks the fifth workman, to whose hands the barrow has been returned, hastily hides it behind him.

SECOND W. Y' are always surly, Rollo. We've worked our day—'tis home-time.

FIFTH W. Ay! our cows wait with full udders, and our wives are busy with supper.

Enters Count Osmond, left, back.

ROLLO. Better work, I tell you. The count and his lady are getting tired of waiting for their new castle.

COUNT O. Yes, my good vassals, a little tired, may be,

But not displeased. We know what loyal zeal
You work withal. We give you love for love,
And our warm thanks, good men. Yet we are
crowded

I' the little cottage on the farm, and wish
Our fine new castle.

While Count Osmond speaks all the workmen huddle over to the right, with rustic bows and signs of respect. The fifth workman still conceals the barrow.

FOURTH W. Sooth, sir, so do we wish it for ye; but, asking pardon, we are growing afeared to work on it.

COUNT O. Afraid to work? How's that?

Enter, left, back, Lady Bertha, Grun the nurse, and little Herman, whom Lady Bertha leads by the hand.

FOURTH W. Shall my lady hear it, sir?

COUNT O. Of course, good fellow. A woman may share anything fit for a man—except hardship. Speak out!

FOURTH W. Well, sir, we be afeared the devil prowls here.

COUNT O. Devil prowls?

FOURTH W. Ay, sir, o' nights.

COUNT O. What does that mean?

THIRD W. Witchcraft hereabout, sir.

COUNT O. Witchcraft?

FIRST W. Why, thus it is, sir: For a month past as much work has been done on the castle every night as we have done by day.

THIRD W. Ay, sir, just as much, by the measure of a hair.

FOURTH W. And what we want to know, or be afeared to know, is—Who does it?

COUNT O. Do you hear that, Bertha?

BERTHA. I hear it, Osmond.

COUNT O. The Kobolds!

BERTHA. I am sure of it.

WORKMEN. The Kobolds?

COUNT O. Hark well, my vassals good, and you shall learn.

My lady said to me, This castle old
Now crumbles sadly, and it never was
Sunny and pleasant; let us pull it down
And build a better. Fain I would, quoth I,
But I do fear the Kobolds, who have been
Good and propitious to our house. Belike
Ill pleased they might be if we sacrificed
These antique towers, which their quaint revels
love.

My lady shared my fears; but that same night
When all the stars like twinkling golden tongues
Of bells invisible had signaled twelve,
And we awaked, the door swung wide, and entered

A little troops of Kobolds, in good ranks,
And at their head a grave ambassador.
The envoy pointed to the wall, then bowed
In old and courtly way, and led his guard
Out by the door; but on the wall we saw
Emerge letters of fire, which with a message
Illumined both the chamber and our hearts.
My lady Bertha, you can repeat, I think
That flaming verse—

Lady Bertha passes the child to the nurse, and comes forward.

LADY B. I can, indeed, good men,
And never can forget. The verse ran thus:
We know your wish, and we approve:
To build another hall be bold,
But from the new house ne'er remove
The virtues of your race of old!

COUNT O. You see now, my good men, they are
not imps
Dark and wild and damned that work with us,
But merry Kobolds, good friends of our house,
That watch and ward and bless.

LADY B. Ay, well they ward.
Good neighbors all, look at your golden fields—
For what's more golden to the eye or purse
Than such bright harvests? And your vines
behold,

Dangling their purple clusters heavy with wine.
Is 't in the memory of the oldest of ye
'That e'er a field was blasted, cattle killed,
Or barns set fire, in this dear favored place?
If hot skies menace drought, the Kobolds blow
From hills soft milky clouds to wash our lands
With fatness. If the unruly nimbus lowers,
Laced with foul gleams, the Kobolds puff away
The thundrous threat, that elsewhere drops its
 harms.

Ay, my good men, 'tis sure the friendly elves
Top up by night what you have built by day,
As saith my husband lord; and I will add
They do 't for love of him, my lord, in whom
The honor of our ancient house is bright,
Undimmed, enlarged.

COUNT O. If so, whose praise?

But I assure you 'tis my Lady Bertha
The Kobolds love better.

FIRST W. We know that, sir. Our Lord Osmond
is good, very good, as good men are good; but
our Lady Bertha is an angel from heaven.
When my little girl was taken of the pox, they
all fled; but my lady came and soothed the child,
and fed her with the right stuff, and saved her.

Here the men exchange signs of respect and
affection for the Count and lady.

FIFTH W. Where may these Kobolds live, sir?
I've heard tell of them, and some say 'tis in
yonder hill.

COUNT O. 'Tis said so; but you know as much as
I. I never saw them before that midnight
embassy.

FIFTH W. Look, sir, at this little barrow which I found behind yonder great stone we lifted to the turret this noon. Is it a Kobold barrow?—though what could they carry in the little thing?

The workman hands the barrow to the Count, who examines it curiously and passes it to Lady Bertha.

COUNT O. There's no doubt 'twas left by our elfin friends. Look, Bertha, did'st ever see aught so elegant as this ebony work seamed with ivory?

Lady Bertha takes it, admires it, places it on ground and puts the handles into the hands of the child.

LADY B. Now, little Herman, trundle the pretty barrow.

The child wheels the barrow down stage and up again to Lady Bertha, while all watch him, and the men give many gestures and signs of delight. Then Count Osmond takes it from the child, who wishes to keep it and reaches out his arms toward it. The Count hands it to Rollo who, obeying the Count's gesture, places it on the ground before the workman. Rollo goes to the side of the nurse and talks.

COUNT O. Take it, good fellow. 'Tis yours.

FIFTH W. But I'll give it to my little lord, sir; he wants it.

COUNT O. But my little lord can't have it. When he's old enough to want *anything*, he's old enough to learn he can't have *everything*. No, no; it belongs to you, if to anyone—you found it. Take it home to your own babies.

A murmur of gratification from the men, and signs of great satisfaction, and of admiration for the barrow. The workman then reaches

down to pick it up, but it moves just out of his reach; he takes a step and reaches down again, but again it moves a little away. This time the workman steps cautiously, reaches slowly, and makes a sudden grasp at it; but it rolls off stage, the workman pursuing it lustily. All the other workmen first are astonished and then laugh derisively, and just as they cease the air is filled with high-pitched musical peals of laughter. The workmen gaze about and at each other, with wonder and some signs of fear.

COUNT O. (To Lady Bertha) The Kobolds.

WORKMEN. The Kobolds!

COUNT O. Ay, they like a bit of fun, these friendly Drolls; but they're good pixies—no harm in them.

Re-enters the workman, breathless.

ROLLO. (To Grun) I'll get a sight of these Kobolds.

GRUN. Better let 'em alone, Rollo. They might pinch you.

ROLLO. No—I'll spy on 'em.

FIFTH W. Did ye see it, masters? And hear the laughing? And then it took a leap into the air and went out with a puff of light, like a candle.

FIRST W. Perhaps it would have stayed with my little lord.

COUNT O. No, no; 'twas sure to go back to its owners—so is everything at last.

FIFTH W. Well, they use it well for us, anyway. (Glancing at the castle and around at the stones and tools.)

WORKMEN. Ay, that's true enough.

LADY B. Pray you, good men, believe my lord and I

Have grateful heart's-ease that you build for us
This castle so enriched, stately and strong.
But 't has been long a-building; sooth we now
Can hardly wrestle with our lively fever
To enter and possess our noble house;
And Time, methinks, foots no expense of days,
Nor many hours, for what remains o' the work.

FIRST W. 'Tis so, my lady, for the outside; but inside there's something to be done yet.

LADY B. Good neighbors, hark! May we not bargain kindly?

On whate'er day ye tell me the castle's ready,
So it be not delayed beyond a sennight,
I'll give to all the village a Honey-Broth,
And I will bind myself, and all who here
Come after me, to do the same each year
On the same day, forever. What say you, men?
Will you not strain a little and hurry a little,
And work the harder these few days to found
So happy a holiday for all your lives,
And for your children's children's lives for aye?

FIRST W. Ay, that we will! Eh, masters?

WORKMEN. We will, we will!

The stage darkens a little.

LADY B. Thanks, my good neighbors all. I'm sure ye'll try

Your best i' the work, not for the feast, but me.
But evening falls; our little Herman sleeps
Early, to keep these roses bright. Farewell!

Exeunt Lady Bertha, the child, nurse, and
Count Osmond.

FIRST W. D' ye hear that, masters? A Honey-broth!

SECOND W. Ay! That's a whole good dinner—as when one says, Take pot-luck with me.

THIRD W. Ay! And pot-luck at the castle is mighty good luck.

FOURTH W. As everyone knows. Let's to it, mates, and hustle. Belike we can end all in two or three days.

FIFTH W. Our Lady Bertha is a sweet soul—bless her!

Exeunt the workmen, leaving the stage vacant. The evening has been coming on, and now it darkens much, as the workmen depart; but suddenly lights up again by reason of a burst of brilliant moon from behind thick clouds, which clear away. Enters Rollo; he looks about cautiously; finding he is alone, he casts about for a hiding place; observes the door leaning against the tree, goes to it and settles himself comfortably behind it, meantime speaking:

ROLLO. I'll see 'em, or say my eyes are no better than pits. That way they come—from the hill yonder—so the folk say. Yonder door's the thing. Hough! a warm day! I'll make me easy anyway.

Rollo takes off his outer coat, and rolls it up into a pillow, which he places under his head as he lies down on the ground, hidden by the door from up-stage, but visible to the audience. Soon he falls asleep. Enter the Kobolds, in six lines, single file, from three points on right and three on left up-stage, tripping in sprightly manner, all coming to a halt at a central place, leaving vacant a small circle. Then enters Kohlibran and comes forward into the circle. All of the Kobolds close in a group around him in front and fall on one knee. Yoho has entered after the King at a little distance and now stands a little behind and to one side of Kohlibran.

KOHL. Now harken, all my jolly Drolls!
When here the moony night unrolls
Her silver curtain 'gainst the sun,
'Tis then our gambols have begun;
But now, though glinting moon hath spun
Her silvery gauze, and day is done,
To-night we must not play, but work,
While yet the elfin shadows lurk
Before the dawn.

Here a long, harsh snore from Rollo causes the Kobolds to start and stare about and at each other, and the King stops and stares a moment.

KOHL. I say before the dawn must we
Complete this castle fair to see
In every part.

Here Rollo emits another snore still more noisy and prolonged.

KOHL. What is this unbeseeming sound?
Up, elves, and ply the place around,
To find what monstrous thing is wont
To perpetrate this shocking grunt,—
If there be gross or mortal eye
Ventures our quaint rich rites to spy.

The Kobolds run about, searching, and Rollo is found, roughly wakened, dragged out and rolled and hustled and pinched, till at last he gets on his feet, and runs away roaring lustily, with all the Kobolds in pursuit.

KOHL. Kobolds, return! Let go the peeper—
A wheezy fool, a silly sleeper.
(To Yoho) My nimble elves must work to-
night,
To have the castle done ere light.

YOH0. (Aside) Work? I'll run,

Till after work's begun.

Re-enter the Kobolds; exit Yoho, stealing out.

KOHL. Ye hustled him and pinched him well—
He'll peep no more, I dare foretell.
But now to better things give place:
Ye know the Lady Bertha's grace
Hath pledged a Honey-broth apace
To all her happy peasantry
Whene'er the castle finished be,
And binds herself and all her race
That e'er inhabit in this place
To give the banquet every year
On that same day with generous cheer.
Now o'er and through the castle go
And use your merry magic so
That when with dawn the turrets turn
To red, as if the stones would burn,
The castle, like a sculptured urn,
Inside and out shall perfect be
For Bertha and her lord to see.
Away and work!

The Kobolds all go crowding merrily into the castle by the doorway, leaving King Kohlibran alone. Enters Yoho, in a sprightly, gay and gamboling manner, and bows before the King.

KOHL. What, nonny, what? Our elves are all
Hard at their work in yonder hall,
And you come idling in?

YOH0. Unkie, work be hanged!

KOHL. Tut, tut, Jack-pudding! You'll be whipped
for your face, some day.

YOH0. Why spoil a wise fool with work, Unkie?

KOHL. Wise fool? What, what! Cold fire, hot snow,
Dark light, light dark, and so-is-not-so?

YOH0. Which is wise, to hate or to love—tell me that, Unkie.

KOHL. To love, of course.

YOH0. Mark now: The wise fellow hates folly, but the fool loves wisdom—a wise fool he! Oh, Unkie!

KOHL. Ha! hum!

YOH0. And look you, Unkie, I know that a hundred-pound is a hundred-pound.

KOHL. Ay, that's wise enough.

YOH0. Yes—a hundred-pound wise. Now, as I weigh not a hundred-pound with all this little body, my wisdom is more than all the mass of my folly. Oh, Unkie! Shall I tell you, Unkie, how to know your courtiers?

KOHL. Ay, babble that, now.

YOH0. Why, thus it is: He that is no bit of a fool is a big sum of a villain.

KOHL. Ha!

YOH0. Your fool is the only ripe thing, Unkie.

KOHL. How make you that?

YOH0. Tell me, Unkie, do you know everything?

KOHL. No, indeed.

YOH0. Then is your wisdom yet raw, like crabs half stewed. But the fool knows nothing; therefore he is cooked through, and a ripe dish. Oh, Unkie!

KOHL. You shall not escape work. Get you to the woods and fetch me a good large evergreen, to put on top of the tower.

YOH0. The tower?

KOHL. Ay, the tower, for good luck, and to keep off bad spirits.

YOH0. Unkie, that's twaddle.

KOHL. What, sir?

YOH0. Is not twaddle nonsense? And nonsense is folly; and folly is fool-work; and sure what's laid on me is fool-work. Oh, Unkie!

KOHL. Go do it, rogue.

YOH0. But, Unkie——

KOHL. Quick! Jump! Begone!

Exit Yoho. Here follows a pantomime of some length. Kobolds emerge from inside onto top of tower of the castle and one comes from the door, mounts a stone, and it at once flies up to the top of the tower, where the others receive it and set and mortar it in its place. Then comes forth one wielding a huge paint brush and brings to the King a large surface of paper painted, showing a tint proposed for some interior walls. The King examines it in several lights, close to it, and from a little distance, and rejects it, shaking his head and gesticulating with strong disapproval, and the Kobold returns into the castle crestfallen. Then one flies down from the tower, mounts a stone, which flies at once up to the tower as before. Then one comes out with paint brush and another tint on large surface, which he presents to the King, and now the King approves it, and the Kobold returns happy. Then one flies down from tower for a stone and the stone flies back with him, all as before. Then comes one from castle with huge brush, as before, showing the King the approved tint and another to go under it, which the King approves,

and the Kobold returns. Then come forth two Kobolds gesticulating at each other in a bickering and quarrelsome way and soon, on their way to the King, fall into a scuffle and fisticuff, which the King discovers, and speaks:

KOHL. Ye naughty elves! What! will ye fight?
And quarrel in our royal sight?
What law have I pronounced so plain
As that ye shall not fight, on pain
Of our most royal stern displeasure,
And punishment in proper measure?
So, stand ye up, one here, one there;
Now, fight away, and bravely square,
Not at each other, but the air.
That's well! Keep up the pretty fight.
Good sooth, it is a proper sight!
I think I'll teach ye all at last
'Tis love that holds our kingdom fast,
And every tongue of spite shall fly,
As flame is canceled in the sky!
Now, exercise!

The two Kobolds thus commanded take their places about a rod apart, facing the audience, and continue to square and fisticuff the air. Then an elf flies down, and mounts a stone which flies up to the tower, as before. Then two come out of the castle, to go to the King, but seeing the two elves fighting the air, they stare a moment and then fall into ecstasies of jeers and laughter; which the King discovers, and speaks:

KOHL. Ye naughty elves! What! will ye jeer
At your unhappy fellows here?
I'll move you to a kinder play;
Step in between; now, laugh away!
Since ye will mock so fine and fair,
Now cackle to the empty air,

As gentler brooks with better grace
Prattle into a leafy space.
Come, giggle!

The two take place between the other two who are fighting the air, and laugh foolishly into space. Then once more an elf flies down from the tower, mounts the last stone and it flies up to its place and is set. Enters Yoho, carrying on his shoulder a large evergreen tree, and staggering under the weight of it.

YOH0. Here's your evergreen, Unkie.

KOHL. Ha! Good! Up with it onto the tower.

Yoho bestrides the tree which then flies up with him to the tower and is received there by the Kobolds and erected on the turret. The elves come crowding from the castle and surround the King, and then all on the tower come flying down, and together signify by signs that the work is done and the castle finished. Meantime the moon, with which the stage has been brilliant, has ascended toward the left and gone out of sight, and the stage darkens a little. At same time a very faint streaking of dawn appears over the hill in the background, and this gradually grows brighter. The King speaks to Yoho, who at once, in his own manner, communicates to the four elves under punishment that the penalty is ended, and they join their fellows around the King.

KOHL. Fine spirits, ye have nobly done;
But now behold the golden sun,
With all his rainbow garments on,
Peeps o'er the ridge, and soon he will
Come tumbling down the beamy hill
To light the fields that now with thrill
Of coming morning wake and wave.
So hie we to the Kobold's cave;
We leave a lightsome day in troth,
For Lady Bertha's Honey-Broth!

Exeunt Kohlibran and all the Kobolds. The morning light deepens and the turrets burn red in the glow. Enters the first workman, who stares around at the ground and at the castle. Enters then the second workman.

FIRST W. What say you to this, bully boy?

SECOND W. All the big stones gone?

FIRST W. Ay, and the turret finished.

SECOND W. What say, indeed?

Enter all the workmen, right and left.

THIRD W. Early to work, mates. Sooth, my mouth waters for the Honey-Broth.

FOURTH W. Where be the stones?

FIRST W. Up on the tower.

All the workmen stare at the tower, and at each other, and there is a general loud murmur.

FIFTH W. The Kobolds!

ALL. The Kobolds!

SECOND W. Have they finished the castle inside?

THIRD W. We'll see that.

All the workmen huddle into the castle. Enter Rollo and Grun.

GRUN. I told you so. What would you be spying for?

ROLLO. Devil take your telling! Perhaps that's what brought 'em on me.

GRUN. Was that what made you turn Jack Spy? I warned you.

ROLLO. They lit on me like hornets, or like lobsters with their pincers. There's not an inch o' my back or thighs or calves but's sore-blue.

GRUN. Well, better let alone what lets you alone.

Enter the workmen from the castle, with general exclamation.

FIRST W. Done, every inch!

SECOND W. What will the Lady Bertha say?

THIRD W. Ah! the Honey-Broth, this very day!
Eh?

FOURTH W. So said our Lady.

FIFTH W. Not a stroke left for us but to hang
the big door. Come, we'll whip it into place
in a thrice.

ROLLO. Ay, do: it got me whipped enough.

The workmen lay hold of the heavy door, drag it to the castle and hang it on its hinges at the portal. Meanwhile enters Lady Bertha, surveying the workmen, and then they come to her respectfully.

FIRST W. My Lady, your castle is finished.

SECOND W. Ay, outside and inside.

THIRD W. Ay, and all swept out.

FOURTH W. Sooth, so; all left as clean as a
whistle.

FIFTH W. And we be main glad for you, my
Lady.

BERTHA. And you found it thus this morning,
my good men?

FIRST W. So it was.

SECOND W. Ay, when we got here at sun-up.

THIRD W. And we be a-thinking 'twas your
friends, the Kobolds, did it.

BERTHA. Indeed, indeed, my men, but this is good!
And, sooth, I am right sure 'tis Kobolds' work.
The quaint sprites are our friends; and look
where they

Have perched an evergreen for gentle omen.
Yonder red turret, fading now, will burn
Thus always with the glad-returning sun,
Like as our hearts, there roofed, will glow and
nod

Unto the blessed day-spring. Thank ye, all,
And thanks to the good sprites. Osmond, my
lord!

Enters Count Osmond.

BERTHA. Look, look, my lord, my husband, and
my love. Look, look, 'tis done, in this last
night, 'tis done!

Count Osmond surveys the castle, Bertha and
the workmen.

COUNT O. The Kobolds, Bertha!

BERTHA. Ay, my lord, most sure;
So have I said, and all the workmen say
Surely the Kobolds.

COUNT O. A beaming day for us,
A royal day! Have yet you stept inside?

BERTHA. Not yet: come, now we will go in to-
gether.

Count Osmond and Lady Bertha enter the
castle. Rollo and Grun stand apart talking,
and he makes rustic familiar love to her.

FIRST W. Mates, let us take down yon lift and
tackle.

THIRD W. She said naught about the Honey-
Broth.

SECOND W. Get along with your greedy paunch.
Do your work first.

FOURTH W. So! When did Lady Bertha forget?

FIFTH W. Down with this rigging.

The men take down the derrick and tackle, and remove it off the stage; meanwhile Rollo and Grun converse.

ROLLO. Come now, pretty Grun, say the word—
there's a honey!

GRUN. Court a little longer, Rollo.

ROLLO. I've been after you these two months.

GRUN. And there's ten-months more in the year,
my lad.

ROLLO. Ten months!

GRUN. Did ye come courting before ye chose?—
tell me that. And why should I consent at a
look?

ROLLO. Will you leave me dangling for ten
months?

GRUN. If ye call it dangling, I'll let ye hang a
main time, thank 'e.

ROLLO. O, now, Grun, come, be as pretty as you
look, and say yes.

GRUN. And how pretty do I look?

ROLLO. As pretty as—as—as—

GRUN. Ay, now, as what?

ROLLO. As every woman would be, but no other
is. Say yes,—there's a honey.

GRUN. I'll think of it, Master Rollo.

ROLLO. Think of it?

GRUN. Is that bad? Then I'll say I'll *not* think
of it. Is that better?

Enter from castle Count Osmond and Lady Bertha. The workmen now gather around the Count and Lady.

COUNT O. Good vassals all, well have ye done,
all well,

And th' Kobolds—gentle sprites—

ROLLO. (To Grun): Gentle? Ha! ha!

COUNT O. They too, with antique holy sorceries
Have fellow-wrought with you; our house is
builded!

And now expect what my dear lady promised.
Bertha, speak to our men.

BERTHA. That will I merrily.

The edge of morn severed my veil of sleep,
Like soft silk ripped, and I peeped through the
shreds.

Sweet the low silver light, the high gray sweet,
Sweet the red turret's flush, sweet the birds'
song,

The spilled brook sweet, and sweet the rustled
leaves;

But not the low silver light, nor the high gray,
Nor the red turret's flush, nor song of birds,
Spilled brook nor rustled leaves, to me were
sweet

As evermore they will be from this house
Your hands have wrought. And now for the
Honey-Broth!

Hie you all home—make up a holiday!
Hither bring sweethearts, daughters, wives
the whole

Gay village to my noon-day festival.

Away! There's much to do.

Exeunt the men with exclamations of pleasure.

BERTHA. Grun, send me hither the cooks, and

faithful Fritz.

Exit Grun.

BERTHA. Run, Rollo, fetch me hither the hunting-
tables

From the old hall, quickly, and set them up.

Exit Rollo.

BERTHA. My dear lord, thou'rt a scholar, versed
i' the law

And able with sound terms. I pray thee, go,
Draw me the deed to make the feast perpetual,
And to the parchment put my ancient seal,
With your good will. We'll make a happy day!

Exit Count Osmond. Enter three cooks.

BERTHA. Ah! good my merry knights o' the pan
and ladle,

Ye must bestir yourselves: I give a banquet.

FIRST C. That's naught uncommon, my lady.

BERTHA. Ay, but 'tis this very day.

SECOND C. That's a little close.

BERTHA. This very noon, or near it.

THIRD C. This noon?

Enters Roll carrying a long table-board which
he leans against a tree, and exit.

BERTHA. And to the village-folk.

FIRST C. The village?

BERTHA. To all the folk, both men and women,
I give

A Honey-Broth—I think you've store of honey.

SECOND C. We have, my lady, but 'twill consume
it all.

BERTHA. Buy more; or if no more's to have,
what matter?

THIRD C. For so many we have scarce food enough.

FIRST C. Nay, not enough; 'twill take all, and fall short.

BERTHA. Use all, and sauce it with your skill to eke

It out. I'll send our steward to purchase more,
Whatever may be had. Be lively men—

I do depend upon you.

Exeunt the cooks. Enters Fritz. Also Rollo with another table-board which he places as before, and exit.

FRITZ. Lord bless your kind ladyship!

BERTHA. Ah! then you know the happy news, my Fritz—

The castle's done, I give my folks a Honey-Broth.

FRITZ. Ay: Lord bless you, I say; 'tis a merry deed.

BERTHA. But we've not food enough in hand, my Fritz—

So the cooks say. Buy all the people have,
I mean what all they'll sell, pleasant to eat.

Then hie with the best horse and cart to the town—

'Tis but a scant four miles—and fetch big stores.

You'll hurry, Fritz?

FRITZ. To my best, my lady.

Exit Fritz. Enters Count Osmond.

BERTHA. My good, dear lord, all's going very well.
And have you drawn me now the deed perpetual?

I see you have—read it—I'm like a child
With all this fond impatience.

Enters Rollo with table-board and places it, as
before.

BERTHA. Three tables—good! Now Rollo, the
fourth one quickly,
And with you fetch some lads to set them up—
And—O, yes, send Grun to me.

Exit Rollo.

BERTHA. O, good my dear lord, if I could but utter
How it doth gladden my soul to make this feast
For our good vassals—they are good vassals,
Osmond.

COUNT O. None better, Bertha.

Enters Grun.

BERTHA. Grun, how's little Herman?
So! fast asleep; that's well. Now harken,
Grun:

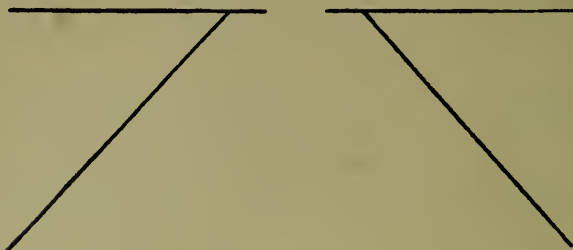
Rollo will be here presently with board
Like these, and lads to set them up anon.
Direct the work for me. Place here the longest.
I' the middle, end to end, extending far
This way and that, both sides, out under the
trees.

At the mid-line my lord and I will sit;
Thence place the other tables spreading
obliquely
From each side of our posts, my lord's and
mine—

Thus:

While saying this to Grun, Lady Bertha has
shown her by steps and gestures where to

place the tables that they may be arranged thus :



Enters Rollo carrying the fourth table-board, and with him enter several serving men carrying the wooden supports to the tables. Under Grun's direction these are set. Meantime Osmond and Bertha go to the tree at left and sit on the circular bench, and Osmond shows and reads the deed to Bertha. Exeunt the serving men after arranging the tables. Enters Fritz.

FRITZ. All is done as my lady directed. I gathered plenty, and the cooks are well advanced. All will be ready in good time. And the folk will come soon. I saw them standing in little groups by their door-steps and on the road.

COUNT O. Thanks, my good Fritz. Our Steward will sit next us at the table. And Fritz, I'll have nothing less than a grand march before dinner. You know what 'tis. Instruct Rollo and Grun how to lead the people after us; Rollo the men and Grun the women. We will go make us ready for our guests.

Exeunt Osmond and Bertha. Enter the serving men who set the tables with china, glass and cutlery. Fritz instructs Rollo and Grun; this in silence, music meanwhile. Then enters a serving man.

MAN. Master Steward, the people are waiting at the gates.

FRITZ. Let them come in.

Exit serving man. The setting of the tables is completed.

FRITZ. Let the cooks know, and be all of you ready to serve.

Exeunt serving men. Enter the people, right and left, filling the space between the tables, but massing into two groups with a clear space between in which are Rollo, Grun and Fritz. Then Rollo and Grun mingle with the people, telling them how to march, etc. Enter Osmond and Bertha richly dressed. They come down the middle clear space and there separate, Osmond going up on the right and Bertha on the left, through the people, greeting them. Then reuniting up stage they come down the middle, the people following closely in couples, led by Rollo and Grun. Fritz takes stand in middle extreme front and parts the people into single files following Osmond and Bertha. Then follows a march of intricate figures and graceful involutions. When the march ends Osmond and Bertha take their places at the middle of the long table. Fritz, Rollo and Grun signify to the people that they shall take seats at pleasure, which they do.

FRITZ. My lord, there are many late arrivals at the gates.

COUNT O. O, bid them all welcome. There is room at this table on both sides. (The Count indicates by gestures places to right and left of the table *beyond stage-setting*.)

FRITZ. Rollo and Grun, go welcome them and place them.

Exeunt Rollo and Grun. The Count and Lady rise and wave welcome in both directions, right and left; then the lady Bertha is seated again, but Count Osmond remains standing:

COUNT O. Good folks and neighbors, the Scripture saith, by the mouth of St. James, "Every

good and perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Let us return thanks: We offer our thanksgivings for this bounty and this happiness, and ask humbly that it be blest unto us. And now, good neighbors all, belike you expect a speech from me; and I may say something **by and by**; but just now I confess I am too honestly hungry for speechmaking, and I hope all of you are too honestly hungry for listening. Therefore we will all soberly fall to. Bring in the—

Bertha interrupts hastily:

BERTHA. My lord, you have forgot this instrument, the bond perpetual.

OSMOND. Most true. Good folks, listen to my Lady Bertha.

Bertha rises.

BERTHA. My people, I am much beholden to you for your love and for the occasion of this gay holiday. Now you will hear that I have done as I promised you (reads the deed): Whereas, I, the Lady Bertha of Wistgaw, with the hearty good will of my husband, Count Osmond, give this Honey-Broth, on this first day of June, in the year of grace 1500, in commemoration of the completion on this day, of our second castle of Wistgaw, now I ordain and appoint that this festival shall be perpetual, and enjoin all and every one who after me shall dwell in the castle of Wistgaw, to give a rich and bountiful Honey-Broth to the peasantry on every first

day of June hereafter, forever. Bertha of Wistgaw. This deed shall be preserved in the archives of our family. Fritz, our Steward, receive it and guard it.

Bertha gives the deed to Fritz, and sits down amid the acclamations of the people. The second workman rises:

SECOND W. We all be main thankful to Lady Bertha and to you, Count Osmond; which to say I have writ a song to a tune we all know well, and with your leave, sir, I will ask the folk to sing it, sir.

COUNT O. Sing on and sing all. I'll take a dip in it myself.

BERTHA. And so will I.

SECOND W. Thank 'e, sir. Now, folks, harken to each verse, one at a time, and sing it. 'Tis to the tune of the "Red Meadow."

Here the second workman recites the song as follows, giving one stanza and then all singing it, and so on:

SECOND W. We yeomen know a thing or two

Ha! ha! Ho! ho!

It can not be gainsayed:

We have our homes, and heaven's blue,

Ha! ha! Ho! ho!

And every lad his maid,

Ha! ha! Ho! ho!

Our noble lord and lady!

We yeomen know the foul or fair,

Ha! ha! Ho! ho!

It can not be denied:

We know what state the princes bear,
Ha! ha! Ho! ho!
But we too have our pride,
Ha! ha! Ho! ho!
Our noble lord and lady.

We yeomen know the good or had,
Ha! ha! Ho! ho!
It can not be withstood:
And this we say, none ever had
A lord and dame so good.
Ha! ha! Ho! ho!
Count Osmond, Lady Bertha!

COUNT O. A good song, and well sung, and thanks,
master poet, and thank all. And now, bring in
the Honey-Broth!

Enter two cooks bearing two immense steaming tureens, which they place before Osmond and Bertha. Both the Count and Lady rise and ladle the broth into large deep plates. The serving men have come in and they carry the plates to the people, during which action, after a few plates have been served comes the fall of the

CURTAIN.

ACT I—SCENE 2.

Six months later, the lady Bertha has died. A stately bed chamber in the castle, having massive stone walls, an immense fire-place and chimney at back, and alongside it a large portal opening on a balcony filled with plants and flowers. The portal has swinging doors of glass. Over the fire-place and mantel hangs a picture of Lady Bertha. Under the picture and on the mantel stands a vase of flowers and a ewer or bottle of water. A large stately bed and a few handsome pieces constitute the furniture, including a large arm chair; also the child's small bed or crib. Time, late night. The stage is dim, but the balcony is highly lighted. Very soft music pervades. Osmond is seen moving among the plants in the balcony, examining them, carrying lighted candle. He sets down the candle, gathers some flowers, and then goes to the edge or rail of the balcony, still holding the flowers:

COUNT O. How lovely is this lone and verging
hour,
And from this balcony how goldenly
The moon bronzes the night! Bright and pert
flowers,
Gay cousins of the day, lineage of light,
Like me, whose eyes and feet night halts, ye
seem
Like me no less to love the moon-espousing
Darkness. With you I'll retinue the night,
Which shall no longer blacken with my grief.
Come up, my heart, and let my Bertha relight
Yon stars for me, and I will learn to see them—
They shall again glow to these mortal eyes
And twinkle comfort.

Osmond enters from the balcony, carrying the flowers and candle, and the stage lights up. He places candle and flowers on the mantel, takes the vase of flowers, goes into balcony and tosses the flowers and water over the rail, returns and fills the vase from the water bottle on the mantel, and arranges the fresh flowers in the vase. The music ceases. Then the little Herman sits up in the crib and calls Osmond, stretching out his arms to him:

HER. Grandpa!

Osmond comes quickly to the child and lifts him from the crib and sits in the great arm-chair, holding Herman. Osmond talks to him, leaning his ear to the child as to catch his soft whispered words, and then repeating them:

COUNT O. What, little man! Awake this time o' the night? How's that? What? "Frightened?" At what art frightened? Eh? What sayest? "Afraid of the big dark?" My boy, the dark's no bigger than the light—learn that! You must grow up, my fine little lad, with fearing nothing—that's the way for our noble house. And why fear nothing? Because there's nothing to fear. And why naught to fear? Because there's everything not to fear. And that everything is as much in the big dark as in the big light, and the name of everything is God. Dost not remember, sweet child, how Grandma told thee of God? Eh? What's that? "What is an orphan?" Who said that to thee? What? "Nurse called thee an orphan?" Yes, 'tis so. An orphan is a child who has no papa or mamma. What? "But you have me?" Yes; but I'm your mamma's papa—so your Grandpapa. What? "And my lady Bertha?" Yes, she was your mamma's

mamma—so your grandmamma. What? What's that? Um—um—um—what? "I don't hear well at all?" Come now, perhaps I hear as well as you speak. Try again. Ah! "Where is my Lady Bertha?" We don't know, little Herman, she died. What? "What's dying?" We don't know that, either. My lady just went away somewhere six sad months ago. What? "Who was papa?" What? "And where is he?" He was a brave soldier and was killed in the wars. What? "What's *killed*?" That means he died. Eh? "Like my Lady Bertha?" Yes. What? "Where is your mamma?" She grieved so much when your papa died that soon she died too. Ah! What? A little louder. "What does *grieve* mean?" It means that she wanted to go with him. Eh? What? O, that was a long speech. Once again. Oh! You are very sorry Grandma died, and went away, because nurse is not so good to you as grandma?" No one could be so good as my lady, dear; but I'll speak to nurse, and she shall be more careful of thee. What? "You want another nurse?" What? "You don't love nurse?" Well, thou shalt have another nurse, a good nurse. What? "She never takes thee up in her arms?" And what? "Leaves thee alone sometimes?" Well, one shall take thee up in her arms—yes, indeed—and thou shalt not be left alone any more.

Enters Grun.

COUNT O. Where have you been, Grun? Your

place is where this child is.

GRUN. Pardon, sir; I knew sir, that you were here; else I would not have been absent.

COUNT O. Hum! Well—go call me Rollo hither, and come back.

Exit Grun.

COUNT O. Come, now, my child, to bed again, and close those bright peepers. What? “You don’t want to sleep?” But ’tis time to sleep. Eh? “Tell you a story?” Oh! no; ’tis sleep-time. What? “A very little short story?” Well, listen then: There was once a little bird, and he came, and he came, hop, hop, hop, hop, hop, hop, hop! Then I spoke to the little fellow, and said: Little Bird, will you stop, stop, stop, stop, stop, stop? Then I went to the window, and said, How do you do—do, do, do, do, do, do, do? But he shook his little tail, and away and away he flew, flew, flew, flew, flew, flew, flew! And now back to bed! What’s that? “*You will tell me a story?*” Eh! “And make it all up yourself?” Well. There was once a boy and a dog and a bear!” Yes. “Then there was a boy and a bear, but no dog!” Yes. “Then there was a bear, but no boy!” Ha! O, the little man! What a tale! ’Tis an epic in three lines! There’s a genius in him. Come, now, ’tis bed indeed this time. Now up you go, now down you come, now up you go, now down you come, now up you go, now down you come—plump!

During these last lines Osmond has swung the child up high in his arms, and then down low,

three times, the last time plunging him into his crib and tucking him in.

COUNT O. There, you sweet precious rogue, go to sleep! Shut your eyes! That's right.

Osmond goes to fire-place and gazes up at Bertha's picture.

COUNT O. My Bertha. Oh! my Bertha, is there another

Like thee in all the earth, or hath there been?
Was't ever known in some gold age or Eden?
Can such a grace descend in frequent showers
That sprinkle many seasons and far lands?
I hope so, will believe so, for men's sake;
But this heart breaks, for thou wert mine, mine
own.

For thee, poor little orphan, as thy nurse
Called thee, belike not over kindly, I fear,
More than twice orphaned, losing thy mother's
mother,

Have I been watchful enough? I fear my grief
Hath very selfish been. But I'll requite
My lady now with better care of thee,
And for thine own sweet sake. Ay, verily
Thou shalt be taken up in arms again—
Ah—!

Enter Grun and Rollo.

COUNT O. Rollo, I noted on the southern lawn
Today a broken branch trailing unseemly,
And the rose-bed neglected; and the north road,
I' the willow corner where the brook circles,
Hath poaching weeds making the fair line
ragged,
And other signals I have noted too

That you of late have slackened attention.

Look to 't!

Is't the king's eye must make the king's horse
fat?

If so, I'll follow you with observation.

But I would rather trust than spy. Look to't!

And here i' the balcony there are pots too dry,
And plants ill-trimmed, and trailing flowers
un-staked.

Go you, observe them now against to-morrow,
And begone quickly.

Osmond points to the candle, which Rollo
takes, and goes onto the balcony. The room
dims a little.

COUNT O. Grun, leave not this room

Till I return—I'll walk an hour i' the park.

He goes near the balcony windows and looks
out through them, and then looks up at the
picture.

COUNT O. Yes, in my one lone hermit-dark among
The oft two-companied trees such perfect
nights.

Mark, Grun, I say, stir not till I come bid you.
There'll be an eye on you.

GRUN. An eye, my lord?

COUNT O. I said an eye.

GRUN. I'd stir not though—

COUNT O. Enough!

Exit Count Osmond. Grun looks into the
child's crib for a moment, then goes a little
toward the balcony.

GRUN. Rollo, you've looked the plants over enough.
Did you hear the Count? He said begone by
this.

ROLLO. I am to look them all over against to-morrow's work on them.

GRUN. I say you've looked enough.

Rollo comes from the balcony, candle in hand, and the room lights up.

ROLLO. But I haven't looked enough at you, pretty Grun.

GRUN. Be done—and begone, as the Count said.

ROLLO. The Count isn't here to order me off, and you're here bidding me stay.

GRUN. I bidding you?

ROLLO. Surely—your pretty face bids me, and your pretty voice bids me, and all your pretty pleasantries bid me. How can I leave you?

GRUN. By yonder plain way, the door.

ROLLO. Well, give me a kiss on it.

GRUN. No.

ROLLO. Ah! a kiss, now! Why not now as well as an hour ago?

GRUN. Not here. I'm afraid of this place.

ROLLO. This place?

GRUN. I mean this room. Sometimes I think Lady Bertha never has gone out of it! And sometimes that picture seems to me half alive. Did you mark, he said there would be an eye on me?

ROLLO. Tush! he meant he would watch you.

GRUN. I fear there's more in it.

ROLLO. You heard what he said to me. He's grown mighty prying and rummaging of late. That kiss, now!

GRUN. Not here.

ROLLO. Come out with me then to the nook in the garden.

GRUN. I dare not.

ROLLO. Then I'll stay here.

GRUN. That's worse. Will you let me come back in ten minutes?

ROLLO. Why not twenty or a half-hour?

GRUN. He might return.

ROLLO. He's good for an hour, or more, likely two hours. You know yourself how he wanders and mourns under the trees by day and night, and longest at night. Come!

GRUN. For ten minutes.

ROLLO. Twenty. Come! (*Looks into the crib.*)
Bub's asleep. Come!

Exeunt Rollo and Grun, Rollo carrying the candle which he has held. The stage is left very dark, though moon-light is visible through the balcony window. A bell slowly strikes twelve. With the last stroke a sudden light breaks in the chamber, and the spirit of Lady Bertha appears standing by the child's crib. The light emanates from her—she seems clothed with light, so that the chamber is brilliant. She looks tenderly at the child and bends over him.

BERTHA. I who am twice thy mother, twice by love,
Being thy mother's mother, come for thee.
Thou'rt like a jewel, meant for some rich care,
But lost i' the freighting, dropt upon the sand
And covered with the ship's discharging litter.
Loosed from my arms, the barge that carried
thee,
Thou fallest on the ocean-edge of days,

With Osmond's grief and sordid servant-
slights
Littered on thee. I'll trust thee here no more,
But take thee to the Kobolds, who shall train
Thy virtuous youth to all the valorous arts
Of chivalrous manhood. But first for Osmond
Here will I leave a pictured face o' the child,
To be upon the wall next mine—where else?
Good Kobolds, enter, bring the picture, and
place it!

A bevy of Kobolds come pouring up over the railing of the balcony and through the swinging door-way into the room, bearing a picture of the child like in size and style to that of Bertha. They ascend to the mantel, fix the picture by side of Bertha's, descend and run through the balcony, vanishing over the railing. At both entrance and departure they pay respect to Lady Bertha. Lady Bertha now lifts the sleeping child from the crib and folds him in her arms. Enters Grun, with lighted candle. She stands aghast and terrified, then speaks with an effort at boldness:

GRUN. What are you? How came hither? Put down the child!

The Lady Bertha turns slowly and fixes her eyes on Grun, who utters a stifled cry. Then Bertha turns away and goes slowly to the balcony, enters and goes to the railing whence she floats up and away through the air, carrying the child with her. Grun has followed tremblingly, and when Bertha thus disappears, she turns back, staggering through the room, screaming. Enters Rollo.

ROLLO. What's the matter? Be quiet!

GRUN. Oh! the boy, the boy!

Rollo turns to the crib and looks into it.

ROLLO. How? Where? When?

GRUN. She took him in arms and flew away.

ROLLO. Who?

GRUN. The Lady Bertha.

ROLLO. Stuff!

GRUN. I saw her face.

Confused murmurs and footsteps are heard outside growing louder and nearer.

ROLLO. You've roused the castle—they're coming.
I'll hide in the balcony and steal in among 'em.

Rollo runs into the balcony and hides among the plants. Enter the servants of the castle, carrying lighted candles. Grun meets them wailing and wringing her hands. They answer with looks and gestures, mingled with exclamations of "What's the matter?" "What's wrong?" "Speak!" "Are you gone daft?" Grun waves her hands wildly toward the crib. They all hasten to it, crowding around it with their backs to the balcony. Rollo enters unnoticed and joins them. Enters Fritz.

FRITZ. What means this din? Why are you jangling here at midnight?

GRUN. Oh! Sir, the boy, the boy!

Fritz goes to the crib and stares into it aghast.

FRITZ. Gone! What! How!

Enters Count Osmond.

COUNT O. What's this? What do you here? What makes this clamor? I heard the din, saw buzzing lights i' the castle. Speak, some one!

FRITZ. O! my lord, the boy, the child!

Osmond strides to the crib, looks into it, starts away trembling, then turns sternly to the crowd of servants.

COUNT O. Where is he? Speak, I say. Who knows? Speak!

FRITZ. My lord, I nothing know—this moment came.

COUNT O. Grun, come hither!

Grun falls trembling on her knees before Osmond.

COUNT O. Where's the boy? Speak!

Grun only wails more wildly.

COUNT O. Find thy tongue quickly—I do think I'll rend you

I' the frenzy of another moment's silence!

GRUN. My lord, she took him in her arms and flew away.

COUNT O. She took him? Who? Who?

GRUN. The Lady Bertha.

COUNT O. What? Are you mad?

GRUN. I saw her face; I swear, my lord, 'twas Lady Bertha.

COUNT O. Blaspheme not, wretch! Away to your room. I'll deal with you anon.

Exit Grun.

Belike the child is stolen.

Some crafty hirelings of designing patrons
Have hatched a trick and stolen the precious
Boy—

Professed friends, but legal enemies,
Willing to wring this rich and fair domain
From Bertha's faultless line. Away, and
search!

Use my best horses! Conrad, take some fel-
lows

And scour the northern road! And you, Ger-
hart,

Off on the southern pike, in double party,

The one to turn by th' old west road at the fork.

Exeunt the servants. Count Osmond calls to one of them, who returns:

COUNT O. Sigmund, take you a light and search the rock,

A cruel place, below the balcony—

He might have wandered to the rail and fallen.

Exit the servant. With the going out of all the servants with the candles the stage has gradually darkened, till now it is dim with the light of only one candle. Fritz remains with Count Osmond. Suddenly on the stone wall burst out these lines, in letters of fire:

We have the boy to train aright,
To be a perfect gentle Knight.
He shall return, and you shall see
A pattern of fair chivalrie.

COUNT O. Fritz!

FRITZ. My lord, the Kobolds?

Instantly under the lines appears, in quaint script, as an autograph, the name *Kohlibran*.

COUNT O. The Kobold King!

FRITZ. Ay! And look, my lord! My lord, look!

Fritz stands with raised arm, pointing wonderingly to the portrait of the child beside that of Lady Bertha. As the Count looks, both frames become suddenly bright and fiery, illuminating the pictures brilliantly. Osmond falls on his knees with face uplifted.

CURTAIN.

ACT II—SCENE 1.

Twenty years have elapsed. The scene is the same as in Act I, Scene 1, except that the castle shows twenty years of age. Count Osmond, now ninety years old, is not demented radically, but is different at different moments. Sometimes very sensible, shrewd, wise and again very childish, a little wandering, credulous, fanciful. Sometimes he knows Hilda perfectly well; but sometimes he thinks she is an angel guarding him. He is given to very early rising, and Hilda, who watches him closely, always rises early so as to look after him. Her attitude to the old man is one of deep reverence and loving care.

Time, early morning late in the month of May. Curtain rises on vacant stage.

Enters from castle door Count Osmond. He leans heavily on a staff and comes slowly.

COUNT O. So old, old, old, old, old!

Old—and when shall be young again?

Gracious Mercy, when? Ninety to-day!

Ha! all my gossips are older, older, but young!

Enters Grun from castle and stands watching the old Count. He caresses the large tree surrounded with a seat and leans on it.

COUNT O. Older than ninety art thou, and yet art young;

And light's a million times ninety, but young,

And drops his fires on me these ninety years,

And yet the sun is young. Ha! 'tis because

They end and look not onward; but I

Who peak over th' horizon, I grow old—

Which means that I am going whither I look!

Exit Grun into castle.

COUNT O. Ah! sough! sough! 'Tis early warm to-day—

The sun but hangs his chin on th' east, yet's hot.
Sough! Sough!

He sits on the seat encircling the tree. Enter Grun and Hilda from castle.

HILDA. As usual, at the sun-up, seldom later.
Was ever known so old and young a soul?
His retinue of years sometimes discourse
Sweet wisdom to him, sometimes sweet delusion—

A Solon now, anon a tender babbler.
'Tis strange to be this hour ninety years wise,
And the next moment less than prattling child;
But howsoever, most dear and honorable.
The aged ought to be most dear next Heaven,
For they are nearest Heaven, and shine white
with 't.

He likes few with him. Go, but be not far.

Exit Grun.

HILDA. Now, will he know me, or not know me,
or speak
Of angels and his lady, or say naught,
Or do all these in a breath, as often he does?

Hilda goes to the old man.

HILDA. Good morning, bright good morning, dear
Grandsire, dost know the day? Your birth-
day 'tis.

Ninety years old to-day! To think of that!

COUNT O. Ninety! Who says that? No. Millions
of them,
Sky-fulls of angels! Thou are one, an angel,

Sent to me by Bertha, Lady Bertha.

She always sends the same, yes, you, the same.

HILDA. Grun! The same, Grandsire, always me,
the same.

Grun! Grun! Why, Grun! Grun, I say.

Enters Grun from castle.

HILDA. He's in his wandering way—

GRUN. 'Tis grown more frequent.

HILDA. Perhaps. I have not noted. Prythee,
fetch me

The fragrant lotion on my dresser. Hasten!

Exit Grun. The old man has let his head drop
forward and seems absent and inattentive.
Hilda takes off his hat and loosens his collar.
He looks up.

COUNT O. Cannot you sing?

HILDA. Oh, no!

COUNT O. All angels sing.

HILDA. No, only some. I'm of the talking kind.

COUNT O. And those that sing they can not talk?
Is't so?

HILDA. Oh, no, the singers can talk too. Ah! Grun!

Enters Grun with the vial, which she hands
to Hilda who laves the old man's head and
face and neck, cooing to him all the time.

COUNT O. Hilda!

GRUN. Himself again, my lady!

HILDA. Yes.

This moment; he changes on and off, like April.

COUNT O. Hilda!

HILDA. Yes, Hilda—who else?

COUNT O. My own pretty Hilda!

HILDA. Yes, just your own, your own Hilda!
Who else?

Hilda hands the vial to Grun.

HILDA. Replace it, Grun.

Exit Grun.

COUNT O. None else. The old, old man
Has no one else but you.

HILDA. No one but me?

Why, then call me a hundred. Wilt like that?

COUNT O. Nay, nay. I'll have you one, just one,
yourself.

HILDA. Well, I'll be one, and you are one; that's
two!

And merry hours will we two have together!
Come now, and let me see you walk in the park,
And you will see me too, for I'll go with you.

Hilda helps the old Count up, and puts arm
about him and slowly they walk away toward
rear of the castle. Soft music. After a few
steps the old man stops, looks around, and
then at Hilda, half absently.

COUNT O. Yes, merry hours, we two, ha! as you
said,

But that I fear you.

HILDA. Fear me? Fear your Hilda?

COUNT O. Not Hilda, but you, the angel. All fear
angels!

I think y' are made of light! Have you just
dropt

From Heaven? Did Lady Bertha send you?

HILDA. She did.

COUNT O. And what says Lady Bertha, my Lady
Bertha?

HILDA. She says she waits you yonder every hour.

COUNT O. Ha! yes! And I am coming—it must
be soon!

Ha! I'll not fear you; go with me under the
trees.

Did she send word of Herman, little Herman?
He died not, nor was stolen; my lady took him
To the Kobolds. He shall return. Is't so?

HILDA. I can not tell.

COUNT O. Not tell? Don't angels know?
The angels?

HILDA. Angels know not everything.

COUNT O. Ah, true! That's true, that's very true,
indeed,

Awaiting me, you say, my Bertha—Bertha!
But only good souls go to her—is't so?

HILDA. They say so.

COUNT O. Say so? Don't the angels know,
The angels?

HILDA. Angels know not everything.

COUNT O. Ah, true! 'Tis only one knows every-
thing,

Only one, only one, One!

No, no, I fear you not—come under the trees.

Exeunt the old Count and Hilda into the park,
behind the castle. Enter Hans and Wilbold,
left front.

WIL. My dear Hans, I think you are afraid of
them.

HANS. No, no! Afraid of what?

WIL. Spirits, ghosts, angels, imps, pixies, elves, and

all the rest of them. Yes, you are afraid of them.

HANS. No, no!

WIL. Yes, yes! I own *I* am.

HANS. That's a good reason why I should not be. Somebody must face them.

WIL. Well, something in that.

HANS. And the Chevalier Hans is the man to do it, afraid of nothing that looks like men or devils.

WIL. O, we all know you are a big fellow.

HANS. By my soul, no bigger in body than in mind, Baron Wilbold, and no bigger in words than in deeds, and no quicker with my tongue than my sword flashes when there's an enemy in front.

WIL. Well, something in that.

HANS. I want some breakfast.

WIL. Too early.

HANS. It might be noon by the race I've had. I wish you'd tell me why the devil you *would* leave my towers at gray dawn and race hither for sun-up.

WIL. Why, as for that, Chevalier, I couldn't stand it any longer—fact—haven't visited anywhere over night before for twenty years. I was homesick—fact!

HANS. Gammon! And there was no need of it anyway, with what you had under my turrets.

WIL. What was that?

HANS. My company.

WIL. Well, something in that.

HANS. Now hark 'e, Baron, since you will not give me a belly-full yet awhile, I'll make bold to ask you for a heart-full.

WIL. Eh?

HANS. Yes—a long time I've wished to speak of it.

WIL. Then why have you not?

HANS. Afraid—just afraid.

WIL. Afraid? I thought the great and doughty Hans feared no one, man or devil.

HANS. But this is a girl.

WIL. Um! Well, something in that.

HANS. I assure you, my dear Baron, I'm confoundedly in love.

WIL. Well, then, fall in deeper, or jump out altogether.

HANS. That's just it—deeper. That's where I want your help.

WIL. Mine?

HANS. Yes. The girl is your daughter.

WIL. What? Hilda? What are you saying, Chevalier? Preposterous!

HANS. And why?

WIL. You are forty-five if you're a day, or forty-seven—which is it? And Hilda has barely turned twenty.

HANS. A woman is always twice as old as her years. Twenty, say you? That's as good as a man's forty. There you have a man and a woman. If I were twenty-five it would be a woman and a boy.

WIL. Well, something in that! But—,
Um! Um! Um! Pish! Nonsense!

HANS. Not at all, Baron. Do you wish me to understand that you oppose me?

WIL. Well, um! Not exactly that. That is Hilda's business.

HANS. Hilda will obey her father, like a pious girl.

WIL. Will she? Ha! You'll find she has a mind of her own.

HANS. So? But you can help, if you will.

WIL. Hilda is a pretty maiden. But you think, perhaps, she is sure to be owner of this rich Wistgaw.

HANS. That has nothing to do with it.

WIL. By my soul, but it has much to do with it. Would you want her, now, if her only dower was my little hall of Eisenfelds?

HANS. Ahem! Of course, 'Chevalier Hans must be mated, and his lands must be mated' too.

WIL. Ay! So! You've heard the story?

HANS. Story?

WIL. No? There was a little fellow named Herman who would be rightful heir to Wistgaw, if living. 'Tis said he never died, but the spirit of his grandmother took him away and gave him to the Kobolds to be brought up. What if he should come riding up some fine day, with plume and crest and lance, and claim his acres?

HANS. Old wives' tales.

WIL. My Steward, old Fritz, says he saw it.

HANS. A crafty old knave,—likes to make himself important.

WIL. Um! Um!

HANS. Besides, Baron, once get me married to Hilda and I'll pit my sword against this Herman's, or any man's.

WIL. Well, something in that. Hark 'e, Chevalier Hans,—we've been good cronies a long time, and many's the good bout we've had with bumpers, and more to come, I hope, and your lands join mine, and you're a big bold fellow—though, sooth, I've never *seen* any of those hacking battles you tell about.

HANS. *Tell* about?

WIL. Well, well, well, well, I don't doubt you—though, faith, I'd like to see that whopping carcass of yours parrying, lunging, hacking and hewing—it were a brave sight.

HANS. You'll have it.

WIL. Well, I've no objection to you for a son-in-law, but I'll not force Hilda to it.

HANS. But you'll persuade her, urge her?

WIL. Why—yes, I'll speak for you, commend you. I see her yonder in the Park, coming this way. Be off with you, and come back soon; but no eaves-dropping, mind you!

Exit Hans, left front. Enter Hilda from park, behind castle.

HILDA. My father, why back so early?

WIL. Homesick, my dear, just homesick.

HILDA. Homesick? Was it not host-sick?

WIL. Host-sick? What's that?

HILDA. If I passed an hour in the castle of the Chevalier Hans, I should be sick of my host.

WIL. Tut, tut, tut, tut, tut! That's no way for a girl to speak of a valiant Knight.

HILDA. Is he valiant, papa?

WIL. Assuredly, you should hear his deeds.

HILDA. Who tells them?

WIL. Why, well,—as to that—

HILDA. O, I know, he is stuffed with his own words; but that makes but lean fame.

WIL. Tut! tut! I've wintered and summered him a long time, and he's a good crony and a good Knight. Hilda, what say you, now, to the Chevalier Hans for a husband?

HILDA. For a husband? Well, I say nothing to him.

WIL. Nothing? Why nothing?

HILDA. Because he says nothing to me.

WIL. Yes, he has asked me for you.

HILDA. But that's not asking me for myself.

WIL. Hey-day! hey-day! my girl. Where learned you that pretty treason?

HILDA. No treason, no rebellion; only a knowledge of my gentle papa, my commander.

WIL. Well, something in that!

HILDA. I know you would not force your motherless girl to a detested marriage.

WIL. Force, force? Why, no. Force? By my soul, I would not, and by my head I will not,

Hans or no Hans. All the same, Hilda, 'tis my wish and will that you marry him, and he has asked for you boldly and fairly.

HILDA. And why?

WIL. Why? What mean you? Because he loves you.

HILDA. *Does* he love me, papa?

WIL. He says so.

HILDA. But do you believe him?

WIL. Tut, tut, tut, tut, tut, again. You are speaking of a brave knight.

HILDA. Truly, he says that! But I'll not marry him, father. What you call his deeds make a rattling gale from his own mouth; but they'll not drive this little craft on a shoal. No, no; I'll keep the open sea.

WIL. Now look you, Hilda, the Chevalier Hans is a doughty Knight and my friend and my guest—

HILDA. Guest? Better say Cousin Bottle-tipper. He almost lives here.

WIL. Well, something in that; but that's as I'll have it.

HILDA. And I think drinks nowhere else. Did you see any wine in his hall?

WIL. Faith, no, I never thought of it. Well, something in that. But, however, I have given him leave to address you, and that means duty in you. I don't command you to marry, as many a father would—I'll not do that; but I'd like to see you his wife, and I bid you consider and

use him well. And you'd not take my words lightly, Hilda.

HILDA. Use him well—that means use him as he deserves. Yes. Don't tie up my wit too short, dear papa. Leave me a little frolic. Why should I take him seriously? He cares nothing for me.

WIL. Why so? You are pretty and sweet enough to love.

HILDA. But he's too big a braggart to love any one.

WIL. Tut, tut!

HILDA. He wants the broad lands of Wistgaw.

WIL. Well, something in that. But why should he not want them?

HILDA. True; but he'll find this little bird too quick a wing for him if he hunts me for that fat meat, the old grimalkin!

WIL. Hilda, Hilda, what's this? I bid you be better-mannered. Remember he has my grace and favor. Look to yourself.

HILDA. I'll treat him in two ways, dear papa; first, as being in grace with my father, and then as being in disgrace with me.

WIL. Tut, tut! Look to it!

Hilda turns away petulantly, defiantly, roguishly and walks toward the castle. Enters Hans, left front. Wilbold takes him by the arm and turns him so that both the men stand with back to Hilda, and Wilbold signs toward her with his thumb over his right shoulder. Just then Hilda, as if to speak again, turns, sees Hans and Wilbold's gesture, and turns away again more defiantly and mockingly than before.

WIL. There she is, like a pretty little tower all grown with ivy, but mighty frowning and warlike. I've done what I can for you, and will; but you'll have to lay siege yourself.

HANS. I don't know how to woo, Baron Wilbold—except with my sword.

WIL. Faith, I think you'll get little of Hilda, if you don't learn. Come, begin, now; to her! Begin, I say.

Wilbold signs again with his thumb over his shoulder toward Hilda, and exit left. Hans sheepishly watches Wilbold retire. Hilda, who has seen the Baron's gesture and retreat, turns away again with a very roguish, mocking, whimsical manner. At same moment Hans turns and goes to her, as she stands with her back toward him.

HILDA. No, no, papa; say no more. I'll not marry him. I saw the old merchant-lugger plotting with you; but he'll not get little me on his decks—no, no!

HANS. Hem! hem!

HILDA. No wonder you clear your throat of him! I wish you'd clear your mind of him!

HANS. Hem! Ah-h-h!

HILDA. He's an old thing, a bygone, just a gray old Jack—nothing left but the wag of his ears, or of his tongue, too. Sooth, yes, he brays enough for ten asses! Nonsense, Papa!

HANS. Hem! Ah-h-h!

HILDA. There's nothing in all his big striding carcass but victuals and drink—he's a granary, a meat-stall, a wine-tun. Abominable, Papa!

HANS. Hem! hem! Ah-h-h-h!

HILDA. And he's a mere mouther, a windy braggart, a cowardly blusterer, a strutting swash-buckler. Sooth, if his sword rattled like his stories, 'twould be heard around the world. I've heard say a goose flapped at him on his land, and he fled in a fright. For shame, Papa!

HANS. Hem! hem! hum!

HILDA. And he knows nothing—I warrant he cannot write his name. Tut, tut, Papa!

HANS. My lady, Hilda—

HILDA. O, if you come to that, not only to plead his stupid case but to ape the rusty growl he calls his voice, I have done. I say, say, say, say say, say *No!* . . . No, no, no, no, no, no, no!

HANS. I say, lady Hilda—

Hilda turns quickly toward him.

HILDA. Oh! You are yourself! Fie, fie, fie, fie! The Chevalier Hans of Althausen, a listener, an eavesdropper! Fie, fie!

HANS. But, my pretty Hilda—

HILDA. Oh! fie, fie, fie! But I think you can not tell what I said.

HANS. Why as to that—

HILDA. Yes, as to that, I think you can not. But I can put it all in one little syllable; what you listened to—fie, fie!—is all in one short word, the TRUTH!

Exit Hilda into the castle, tripping away with a trill of gay, mocking laughter.

HANS. Ha! ha! fooled, flouted, hooted, jeered!

Enters Rollo from rear of castle.

HANS. Ha! ha! Tweaked, rapped o'er the knuckles,
plucked, pooh-poohed! Ha! ha!

ROLLO. (Aside.) Now, what is Sir Swagbelly
saying to himself?

HANS. The Chevalier Hans of Althausen twitted
and laughed at, ha! ha! by a chit of a girl!
When I get you into my towers, my pretty lady
bird, you'll cackle another way, I think. Ha!
ha!

ROLLO. Servant, Chevalier Hans.

HANS. Ha! Rollo! Here, you fellow!

Rollo comes forward.

ROLLO. Servant, sir.

HANS. The lady Hilda has just given me a devil
of a rating—and all for wishing to marry her!

ROLLO. Ah! that is very bad for my lady.

HANS. What? Blockhead, mind your words, or
I'll crack your crown.

ROLLO. I mean 'tis bad for my lady to quarrel
with your worship.

HANS. That's certain. You seem a sensible kind
of fellow, Master Rollo.

ROLLO. Ay, sir. But for cracking my crown, your
worship, what would you do it with? Would
you butt me?—for I think my skull is thicker
than any but yours.

HANS. Out, fool, lout, rascal! Take that, and
that, and that. (Strikes Rollo.)

ROLLO. Oh! of mercy, hold, your worship, hold

your hand, of mercy!

HANS. Clown, I am more like to mercy you with cuffing your ears. Hark'e—go fetch me your wife.

ROLLO. My wife? Grun?

HANS. Ay, Grun, your wife. She is the Lady Hilda's maid—isn't she?

ROLLO. Indeed she is, and was her nurse before her maid.

HANS. So much the better. Fetch her.

ROLLO. But, sir, I—I—

Enters Grun from castle.

HANS. Lout, will you be cuffed again? Off with you!

ROLLO. But, sir, here she is, pat for your worship's purpose.

HANS. Ah! the pretty Grun! Come hither, pretty Grun.

Rollo stares at Hans sourly, then goes to Grun.

ROLLO. There's Sir Snappy Hackstory wants you.

GRUN. Hold your tongue! He's a good big swashing Knight.

Grun goes to Hans.

ROLLO. (Aside.) Ha! both of 'em. Is that the corner o' the wind? I'll lurk a bit, watch a bit.

HANS. Ah—h—h! So may a man see how he has been a busy fool!

GRUN. How is that?

HANS. And where have my eyes been? Tell me that!

GRUN. Your eyes? In your head. I suppose.

HANS. By my head, have I had a head? Where was it, and my eyes and my wits, that never before I have seen how charming is Grun!

GRUN. Nay, now, Chevalier Hans, I am a married woman and honest.

HANS. And may not a woman be honest and charming?

GRUN. Oh! Chevalier, some men say not.

HANS. Then they have not met you, pretty Grun.

GRUN. Oh, sir!

HANS. And if a belted Knight puts arm about you, so, and takes a kiss, so—does it not taste good?

GRUN. Ay, sir, a poor woman is pleased with a fine bold knight, and his favors taste good—and so, why, there!

HANS. Ay, ay! And so another! And another!

GRUN. That's enough now, sir—one to keep, one to forget, and one to wait on.

HANS. Ha! And now, while I wait for the next one, I'll ask you to do me a service.

GRUN. So? I thought so. When a high-born fondles a woman the like of me, he wants something—she must pay for his dawdling.

HANS. No, no, no, no! I was going to ask favor and help of you, and when, to do so, I look at you, I see how comely and charming Grun is.

GRUN. "Help"? Well, what do you want.

HANS. Your favor.

GRUN. My favor?

HANS. With your lady.

GRUN. The Lady Hilda?

HANS. The Lady Hilda—I want to marry her.

GRUN. So! The cat's out! You kiss me to get past me to another. A poor woman might be proud of a Knight's kiss, but not that kind, Chevalier.

HANS. Now, tut, tut, pretty Grun. Would I not marry you if I could? Of course I would—that's what I mean. But as it is, I want to marry the little lady.

GRUN. Then speak to her—that's a man's way. Isn't it a Chevalier's way?

HANS. Why, yes (aside)—devilish sharp tongue—and so I have; but she will not listen. Oh, 'tis past telling how she flouted me. But now, as you and I would wed if we could—

GRUN. Don't lie, Chevalier. The Chevalier Hans of Althausen marry a poor commoner? No, no. But he will amuse himself with her.

HANS. Don't say that, pretty Grun.—(Aside.) Curse her bold face!—Even a king has married a beggar-maid.

GRUN. Yes, a king, a king, but not—

HANS. Not what?

GRUN. Oh, never mind.

HANS. Well, won't you speak for me to the little lady as you feel and think about a Knight who has kissed you? Do so, my pretty Grun.

GRUN. Oh, yes, I'll do that.

HANS. That's a charming Grun. Another kiss!

NO? Well, lose no time about it, pretty Grun.

Enters the old Count Osmond from rear of castle.

GRUN. Not a wink. My lady will be here quickly.

HANS. Now, tell how you know that.

GRUN. By the old Count coming yonder. She is never far when he is near. She keeps after him that closely.

HANS. Ah! good soul!

GRUN. Ay! But go you off, now; and hark, no eavesdropping or spying. You may come back soon, but make some noise about it, mind you.

Grun turns away and goes to the old Count.

HANS. So I will, pretty Grun.

Exit Hans, left front. Grun helps the old Count toward the seat at foot of tree. Soon he stops, and gazes at Grun earnestly.

COUNT O. My little Hilda? No, no. The Angel?
No, no, no!

GRUN. But let me help you to the bench under the tree, Count Osmond.

COUNT O. Yes, yes.

He sits on the bench, then looks at Grun.

COUNT O. The Angel? No, no, no, no!

The old Count leans his head forward, resting it on his hands which rest on his walking stick; sits motionless. Enters Hilda from castle.

HILDA. Ah! the dear old grandsire is here.

GRUN. Yes, my lady, and talking of Angels.

HILDA. Let be, Grun. 'Tis well if the place seem

peopled like Heaven—we shall keep him the longer.

GRUN. That would please you, my lady, but how might the Chevalier Hans think of it?

HILDA. What has the Chevalier Hans to do with it?

GRUN. Much, or nothing, as may happen. The big Knight has been talking to me—he wants to marry you.

HILDA. Yes, so he says; but I think he wants not *me*, really.

GRUN. What then?

HILDA. Oh! my youth, and the bit of beauty I have, and chiefly the fair lands of Wistgaw. Well—what say you to the big Chevalier for a husband?

GRUN. I think, dear madam, that a lady should beware of a man who kisses her maid.

HILDA. What, what, what—do you mean to say—

GRUN. I say nothing, my lady; but a poor woman may be flattered first, and then ashamed. The mighty Hans will be here soon. Will you see him, or leave him to me?

HILDA. Ah, ha! Ah, ha! I see! I smell some fun in the air. Out of your wrap and bonnet, Grun, and give them to me, and take mine away. Ah! that does well.

Hilda and Grun have quickly taken off wraps and hats and Hilda has put on Grun's. Then a rough singing is heard outside.

GRUN. He is coming, my lady.

HILDA. Hurry away! Hold! Put on my garb,

lest he see you going off.

Grun hastily dons Hild's wrap and hat and goes toward castle. Enters Hans left front, sees Grun, supposes her Hilda, and approaches Hilda supposing her Grun. Exit Grun into castle. Rollo has followed Hans in stealthily. During the following talk Hans pauses at some distance from Hilda and gradually draws nearer, turning in doing so till his back is toward right of stage, while Rollo moves carefully so as to keep behind Hans.

HANS. Ha! pretty Grun, what news? I saw the little lady making off. Any success with her? If not, the devil's in it! Eh? Not a word? Perhaps you want a Chevalier's arm around you, as the Chevalier wants it—so. Eh? Still dumb. Perhaps you want a Chevalier's kiss as the Chevalier wants yours—so.

Here Rollo shakes his fist at Hans, and at same moment Hans roughly whirls Hilda around and attempts a kiss. But Hilda springs lightly backward, breaking away from him, and catching sight of Rollo just as he ends his threatening gesture and goes off right.

HILDA. Chevalier Hans! Oh! Chevalier! Fie, fie! Is this the way you treat a lady's waiting woman? Fie, fie! Oh! Chevalier! Ha, ha!

HANS. Not so fast, my lady—

HILDA. Nay, say that to yourself, Chevalier. Fie, fie! Oh, Chevalier! Ha, ha!

HANS. I say you are too quick, Lady Hilda. They that play tricks must look for tricks. You think I didn't know you. I knew you all the time. It is my "Ha, ha!"

HILDA. Did you, indeed?

HANS. By my head—

HILDA. A dull oath, and a vacant oath, yet a sounding oath, as by an empty tub.

HANS. By my honor, fair Hilda—

HILDA. "By all that is not" were as good an oath. Fie, fie! Oh, Chevalier! Ha, ha!

HANS. I say, I should know you under any disguise. Body o' me, my lady—

HILDA. That's a big oath, but not a brave one. Fie, fie! Oh, Chevalier! Ha, ha!

HANS. I tell you, my lady—

HILDA. Nay, but I tell you, that—that—that—that—somebody saw you just now.

Hans looks timidly to right and left and behind him.

HILDA. Oh! he's not here, but he will be, with something to say and do, if I guess right. I'll leave you to him. A merry hour, to you. Fie, fie! Oh, Chevalier! Ha, ha!

Exit Hilda into castle, with a peal of mocking laughter. Hans stands looking after her. Enters Rollo right front, trimming with his knife a stout green stick he has cut in the shrubbery. He clasps the knife and puts in his pocket, eyeing Hans the while, then goes to him and gives him a light tap on the shoulder with the stick. Hans whirls round facing Rollo. The old Count rises from the seat and moves very slowly toward the door of the castle.

ROLLO. That's a tip to show what you're to get, Sir Swagbelly.

HANS. (Drawing his sword.) What? Out, varlet, out, before I cut you in two.

ROLLO. Your sword? Bah! I know a bit of single-stick. I'll show you the twist. Thwack!

By a strong, dexterous whirling blow, Rollo strikes the sword from Hans' hand. Hans thereupon runs to the tree and gets it between himself and Rollo, who chases him.

HANS. Rollo, good Rollo, I beg you, good Rollo, don't be rash. What's the matter? What do you want?

ROLLO. What do I want? To get at you, and I will. What's the matter? Didn't I see you putting arm around my wife? Didn't you take a kiss of her? Out, Sir Rabble! A fine Knight you! I'll polish the back of your Knighthood!

Rollo begins to dodge around the tree, aiming blows, and Hans dodges in like manner. Soon the dodging becomes a race round and round, in which Rollo gains, and Hans bolts from the tree, runs to the old Count, pursued by Rollo, catches the old Count by the arms and holds him between himself and Rollo as a shield. Rollo stops.

ROLLO. So! Chevalier Gammon! Sir Rake, Sir Snap, Sir Quack-Mouth! There lies your sword. Leave my old master, and come out, Sir Quake-liver!

Enter Hilda and Grun from castle. Hilda runs to the old Count, throws off Hans' hands, and puts her arm protectingly over the old Count's shoulders. Hans retreats a little to one side, but keeps back of Hilda, looking timorously at Rollo.

HILDA. What's all this, Rollo?

ROLLO. Why, my lady, I caught him putting arm around Grun and taking a kiss of her, not ten minutes ago on this spot.

HILDA. Oh! no, Rollo! That was I. The big Chevalier has made love to me, and I borrowed

some things of Grun, to play a trick on him. But he swore he knew me, in spite of Grun's togs, and we must believe him, you know—Oh, never shake your head so, we *must* believe him, indeed. And anyway, it was I and not Grun, letting him put arm about me and court me. So away with you, and be a good loving couple.

Exeunt Rollo and Grun together, though Rollo casts contemptuous and suspicious glances at Hans.

HILDA. Pick up your sword, Chevalier. Did you get a slap on the knuckles? No? That's well. But your sword on the ground, Chevalier?

HANS. My lady would not have me use my sword on a peasant lout?

HILDA. No, indeed, big Chevalier; 'tis so much better to throw down your sword and run away—Oh, fie, fie!—and to use an old man for a shield—fie, fie! Oh, Chevalier! Ha, ha!

Hilda leads the old Count tenderly toward the castle, cooing and talking to him. Hans goes left, scowling viciously.

CURTAIN.

ACT II—SCENE 2.

SCENE—The ascending slope of the hill of the Kobolds, occupying about one-third of the depth of the stage, and nearly the whole of the width, leaving just enough space on each side to show the round of the hill. The slope is steep and high, prettily brushed, with outcroppings of rock adorned with gray and green lichens. In front of the hill is an open green lawn. Boughs of trees overhang it in part, projecting on both sides from trunks just appearing in view. Night, with bright moonlight. Enter three Kobolds who look about watchfully, then give a signal by striking on the hill, which returns a hollow, deep, sonorous music, like the stroke of a huge bell, and then opens; a large portion of the front slope and all the width of it dissolve away, showing a fine and large hall, brilliantly lighted, adorned with hanging crystals, and thronged with Kobolds. The interior is so painted as to appear very deep. The rear corners of the deep vista are hung with tapestries. From behind the tapestry at the left enters King Kohlibran, to whom all the Kobolds pay obeisance.

KOHL. Rally, ye canty Kobolds bright,
Who, bred of thrice distilled light,
Make like mid-noon the mid of night
And witch-time change to double day,
Rally, and harken, and obey;
For now's to be uncommon play,
As I shall bid you. Know you, then,
Our Herman must return to men,
But first 'tis Lady Bertha's will
He Hilda meet; this we fulfill.
Go two of you and find the maid,
Where, in her ivied window's shade
Viewing the pomp of stars and moon,

You must return to live with men ;
And you have ta'en our discipline
So well you shall high honor win ;
We render you to human sight
A very perfect gentle knight.
For a preparatory ken
Some several sallies unto men
Thou hast performed, and hither again,
And at their jousts of knights and steeds
Hast done such skilled and gallant deeds
That all the chevaliers exclaimed
Who was that knight so valiant famed,—
Sir Torald hight when fight was on,
But never found when fight was done.
For Herman is thy name by birth,
But hast been Torald called on earth ;
Now 'mong thy kind resume thy name
And man it with its ancient fame.
For time has come you forth to stay
And with your people keep your way.
But first you must a secret know,
And understand before you go :
Although your lands you never saw,
Nor aught else human—such our law—
Yet of the Castle of Wistgaw
And all its meads and forests fair
You are the one and only heir.

HERMAN. Sooth, a rich tale, your Majesty ;
And tell me, please you, who may be
The present holder.

KOHL. You shall see.

She comes at word that lovely she,

A maiden of your mortal kind,
As sweet and good as ever shined
On manly heart. In slumber blind
She comes; and you shall wake her! Find
Some happy way.

Enter at left the two Kobolds, backward, making beckoning gestures with one hand, with the other leading Hilda by a long ribbon, the ends of the ribbon held by the Kobolds. Hilda walks with closed eyes, evidently asleep, yet fearlessly, guided by a dream-sight. Then the two Kobolds tie the ribbon into a graceful knot falling to Hilda's waist, and retire among their fellows, leaving Hilda standing still. The crowd of Kobolds all mass to the right front, one still holding the long silver horn and a little in advance of his fellows. Herman goes to Hilda with evident rapturous admiration, falls on one knee, takes her hand and kisses it. Herman then signs to the Kobold, who blows on the horn the same call as before. Hilda slowly opens her eyes.

HILDA. Is 't music wakes me to light, or light to music?

The Kobold blows the horn again to same strain.

HILDA. That strain again! A very calling music. I think 'twould call my soul out of my body
If heard too much. This ribbon! Mine! But
how?

I think I am awake! But where? What these?
And who is he that kneels, kissing my hand,
And holding it, and looking at me so dearly?
Oh! is this heaven? Or are the banished happy?

The Kobolds form a picturesque group around and at one side, not too near. Hilda and Herman remain gazing at each other. Meanwhile Kohlibran and Yoho are to front on right:

YOH0. Sire Unkie, this man is a liar.

KOHL. What—what—what—what? What's that, fool?

YOH0. Is not a double-dealer a liar?

KOHL. What then?

YOH0. This man is a double-dealer.

KOHL. How make you that?

YOH0. 'Tis twenty years since he was placed with us.

KOHL. Well?

YOH0. And twenty is double ten. Oh, Unkie!

KOHL. You'll be whipped for smartness some day.

YOH0. What matter? I shall not feel it.

KOHL. How so?

YOH0. I shall not know 'tis myself whipped, being called smart.

KOHL. You'll feel the smart of the lash, I fancy.

YOH0. Then it were a smart lash. Now, as a smart wit is a sharp wit, so a smart lash is a sharp lash—which is no lash at all, for all lashes are round and dull. Oh, Unkie!

KOHL. Go to! You're a bad fool.

YOH0. I'll wager you a laugh, Unkie, that I have a better head than you have.

KOHL. Ah! Where's your proof of that?

YOH0. Why here: If a king reign well, like your great majesty, he hath king-wit; but if I make folly, I have fool-wit. And your fool-wit for a fool is as good as king-wit for a king.

KOHL. But you said a *better* head. How that?

YOH0. Yes, because I knew it was as good—you

did not know that. Oh, Unkie!

Here the tableau dissolves.

KOHL. Away, you canty sprites, good elves,
Go now and brightly deck yourselves,
Ready to come unto the dance
Upon my call and ordinance.

Exeunt the Kobolds behind the tapestry at
right corner of cave. Kohlibran, Yoho and the
Kobold with the trumpet remain.

HILDA. Am I dreaming?

HERMAN. Dear lady, no; 'twere pity
If beauty as dear as thine were but a dream.

HILDA. I wake then, yet behold this gentle knight,
Gentle and brave, fairer than all yet seen,
Yea, and methinks than all could ever come.
'Tis strange, 'tis wondrous strange! And thou,
thou art

A stranger within the strange. What is thy
name?

HERMAN. They call me Torald. Lady, I ne'er be-
fore

Met mortal maid. Thou 'rt beautiful and dear.

KOHL. Ay, ay! You see, it works. I've done my
part;

Let Nature do the rest.

YOH0. So Nature will.

Unkie, canst tell me why this twain are like
The fruit of yonder tree?

KOHL. Well, well—and why?

YOH0. Is't not a fair and lovely pear? Oh, Unkie!

KOHL. Go to! You're a simple fool.

YOH0. Not so, neither.

I'll prove you, Unkie, now—

KOHL. Be still! What saith he?

HERMAN. If one from childhood dwelt beneath a
roof,

Even though a temple's, fortunate were he
If first he wandered out and saw the earth
Upon a day celestial, full of sun,
Meads of gay flowers, deep dells of plummy
green,

And brooks like warbling wires of silver strung
Across the bends of hills, and over all
The heavenly dome of blue latticed with clouds;
Or if by night 'twas that he first went forth,
'Then to the moon full-sailing mid cumulous
islands,

Or when the crescent, light full, yet sharp-
peaked,

Swims down a late horizon's soberness,
Leaving the host of stars a-tiptoe, peering;—
So I who, nursed with Kobolds, ne'er before
Met fellow-mortal maid, am prosperous
In seeing first one fair and dear as thou.

HILDA. Pray Heaven I be awake! I'd not be
woood

So sweetly, dreaming.

HERMAN. Nor I dreaming woo,
Most precious lady.

KOHL. Enough! Trumpet the call!

The Kobold sounds the call on the horn as
before.

HERMAN. The Kobolds' call! They come to dance
—with us!

The call is sounded again, the Kobolds pour in from behind the tapestry, right corner of cave.

HERMAN. With us, sweet lady! See them come!

Wilt foot

With me an honorable ancient measure?—

While they will gambol round us like bright birds.

Hilda signs assent and gives Herman her hand, and he leads her to place. The Kobolds have arrayed themselves. They are dressed, in two companies, one all white, one all bright red; but all wear caps of golden yellow with green wavy plumes. Then follows a dance long and full of many intricate and changing figures, moving gaily around Herman and Hilda who dance a stately measure like a minuet in the center. When the dance ends, the Kobolds all mass at the right front.

HERMAN. Dear lady, your dancing is as excellent

As soul, 'tis sure, excels your beauty's promise.

Tell me, doth your sweet countenance forebode

Action in all as rich as in your feet?

And yet methinks you cannot look so good

As good in sooth you are, by your sweet soul

Invisibly fairer than your beauty's praise.

HILDA. Dear prince—for sure a prince you are,
must be—

I wander in a maze. You say I wake;

Yet ne'er before have I been wakeful so;

But now, how be it, in dream or act, I droop?

This scene, these wondrous beings, the dance,
thy praise,

Ah! yes, not least thy praise, my happiness,

Bespeak me rest awhile.

HERMAN. Yoho, a chair.

YOHO. What, is her beauty lame?

HERMAN. Lame?

YOHO. That she requires a truss?

HERMAN. Truss?

YOHO. Ay, so. What is a chair but a seat between two trusses?

HERMAN. Out, fool! Bring a rest-seat!

Yoho runs to side of the cave and brings a light but comfortable easy-chair. Meanwhile Kohlibran beckons and the two Kobolds who brought Hildo come to him:

KOHL. Go toll her home again and leave her where she was asleep at her window.

YOHO. Here's your ointment and rouge.

HERMAN. What?

YOHO. Ay, so! A bolster for lame beauty!

HERMAN. Away, rogue!

Yoho darts off, Herman places chair and tenderly seats Hilda. The two Kobolds approach.

KOHL. Torald!

Herman instantly obeys the King's call; meantime the two Kobolds charm Hilda to sleep, untie the long ribbon, and with gestures and leading by the ribbon make her rise and follow them, left.

HERMAN. What will you, Sire?

KOHL. Would you see a fair sight?

HERMAN. Already you have given me a sight the fairest in the world.

KOHL. But look again.

Herman looks, and sees Hilda following the two Kobolds and starts toward her impetuously.

KOHL. Herman, not so! Stay!

Hilda disappears under the trees left, tolled on
by the Kobolds.

HERMAN. But, Sire, I cannot lose her!

KOHL. Nay.

You shall not; yet awhile must stay.

Behind our hill soon breaks the day,

And morning, on yon crystal crown,

Opens her gates and tumbles down

Her troops of children, rosy crew,

Chasing the berries of the dew.

Come, we must go in!

Kohlibran and Herman enter the cave and all
the Kobolds crowd after. The hill shuts as it
opened, and the stage is light only with the
moon. Music. Soon enter the two Kobolds,
who strike on the hill, which reverberates like
a bell, then opens and the two Kobolds enter.

CURTAIN.

ACT III—SCENE 1.

SCENE—Same as Scene 1 of Act II. Time, early sun-up the next morning, a radiant slant sunlight breaking over everything.

Enters Count Osmond from the castle.

COUNT O. I am not wont to be alone when I come out to the day. Belike 'tis too early—or too late. Yet I think the day is like other days in the morning. Where's my little Hilda? In-doors—safe in the Castle—she must be in the Castle of course. But where is the angel that always comes? The angel never is in-doors, but out-doors always comes. I will look about for my angel.

The old Count wanders slowly off. Enters Hilda from the castle, looking for the Count.

HILDA. I have awakened late—the day's too old!
Where is my ancient saint this lovely morn?
Nay, sooth, but where am I? In what land
living?
I think I grew a woman yester night,
And suddenly learned how richer the joy of
soul,
Richer the joy enriched with the pain too,
Than glee the lamb skips in the meadow withal.
A dream 'twas—must have been; but such a
dream
As was more living than some waking is;
More loving too; being woman by it, I know

I ne'er can love unless my Torald comes,
The perfect Torald of my dream. Alas!
What gain I so? I gain my dream, my dream!
With it, life's full, without it, bootless void.
Ne'er love, say I, unless he come, my Torald?
Doth it mean I love him now? Love whom? A
dream?

Oh, oh, I know not what to say or reason,
But only what I feel, which is new love
Embracing all. The fountains are broken up,
And dream or real, Torald is in my soul,
That now I love the world in every creature.
Come new into my ears, my eyes, my arms,
Ye singing birds, ye painted flowers and trees,
And all ye creatures gentle and needful, come;
I love you all anew! But where's the Count?
The while I chant or pray—which is 't?—
where's he,
The very dear and venerable Count?
Rollo and Grun!—I fear for him.—Why, Grun.

Enter Rollo and Grun from castle.

HILDA. Where is Count Osmond? Have you seen
him this morning?

GRUN. No, my lady.

ROLLO. Not I, my lady.

HILDA. He must have wandered off. Go you this
way and that, two roads, looking for him. I'll
search the grove behind the castle. Quickly!

Exeunt all, Rollo and Grun to right and left,
Hilda behind the castle. Enter Hans, left
front. He holds a flat board and paper and
crayon.

HANS. Oh! She flouts me like a pig, a very pig. I

think a waddling swine would have *more* favor from her lily hands. But a verse may fetch her—many a shrew tumbles before a verse. And I've some good ones in my head picking like chicks at the shell. Come out now, and let's see how you look.

Hans writes and then reads:

HANS. Hilda is like the air.

She is so fine and fair.

Well enough. The air is fine, but is it fair? But who presses a rhyme far? Not a flattered girl.

Hans writes again, and reads:

HANS. She has such pretty ears,

My heart is full of fears;

Right! Any woman will understand that.

Hans writes, and reads again:

HANS. She has such pretty eyes

That I am all surprise.

Good again! A rhyme on eyes is taking.

Hans writes again. Enters Rollo.

ROLLO. Oh, will the big Chevalier tell me—has he met the old Count?—we're all looking for him.

HANS. Away, you lout! Don't you see I'm busy?

Exit Rollo. Hans reads:

HANS. And such a pretty hand,

Better than gold or land.

Good again. That's handsome—makes much of herself and light of her dowry.

Hans writes. Enters Grun:

GRUN. Oh, please you, Chevalier, have you seen

the old Count? We're running about for him everywhere!

HANS. Out, you foul wench! Will you bother me?

GRUN. That's not what you called me last, Chevalier Hans.

Hans turns and looks at her.

HANS. Oh, bless me! So busy I didn't know you, pretty Grun. Give me your pretty lip now. (*Offers to kiss her.*)

GRUN. Know little, get little. Ha, ha! big Chevalier.

Exit Grun, mockingly.

HANS. I'll put that saucy jade in her place, and she'll know it.

Hans reads:

If Hilda is my bride
I shall be full of pride.

Good again. A fair and full ending. And a good contrast. The ears make me full of fears, but the bride full of pride.

Enter old Count Osmund.

HANS. Now will I woo her with the verses, humbly begging her to read them. A man must be humble before marriage, the woman after it.

The old Count has approached Hans and is now at his elbow; Hans is surveying the verses admiringly.

COUNT O. I don't know you. But you are big and strong. I think you can tell me how to find the angel.

Enters Hilda from behind castle.

HANS. Away, old carrion!

Hans gives the old Count a vexed and violent shove with his elbow, which throws the aged man to the ground, while Hans still gazes at his verses. Hilda utters a cry and runs to the old Count. Enter Rollo and Grun at same moment, and the three help the Count tenderly to rise. Hilda, Rollo and Grun lead him toward the castle.

HILDA. Take him to his room, Grun. I will be with him in a few moments.

They go into the castle, while Hilda faces Hans with blazing eyes.

HANS. An accident, my Lady Hilda.

HILDA. Liar!

HANS. Madame! I say I meant not to throw the old man down.

HILDA. Ha! Meant not, meant not! Sooth, a doughty answer,

Oh, a brave answer from the big Chevalier!

And if a wanton hind let fly an arrow

Into a throng, doth he intend the hurt

Of that one man whose heart or throat is stabbed?

You gored him with a brutal arm, and felled him,

Venerable with ninety years; and foul

Words soiled his silvered head. Little you recked

If he was grieved! Oh, I could be a man

One moment long, to brand it on your body,

Wherein alone I think you have some feeling.

It boils my blood and flames around my brain,

Scorches mine eyes, and makes my tear-pools blisters,

That his so ancient honorable age

Brooks such a foul from such a thing as you!

Enters Wilbold behind, so that Hilda does not see him.

HILDA. Pah! go! You pitch the blue clear heavens, and make
The honied bosom of the air a stench!

Hilda is drawn up proudly and scornfully, but dashes tears from her eyes. Exit into castle.

WIL. What's the matter. I never saw my little Hilda like that before.

HANS. Belike you never crossed her will before.

WIL. Well, something in that. But how cross her now?

HANS. Oh! She kicks like a colt at the pretty harness I would put on her, which you approve—I mean the pretty harness, not the kicking.

WIL. Well, something in that. But choose better words, Chevalier—you speak of my daughter.

HANS. No offense, Baron. But, body o' me, she can slap mighty hard with her tongue.

WIL. You must win or lose as you can, Chevalier Hans. I say I never saw my little girl moved so and looking so, since she fought piratical flies with her chubby little fists in her cradle. She is changed—something has happened to her. Faith, I can think she has grown tall suddenly, or else I have lacked note of her height.

Enters Fritz, the steward.

FRITZ. My lord, 'tis the day of the Honey Broth, and I have had no orders. My Lady Hilda

sends me to you, and says she will come herself anon.

WIL. That bothersome thing!

FRITZ. My lord, for twenty of my seventy years I've seen the Honey Broth here, and for thirteen of those twenty I've had your order for it, until, you know, my lord, last year—

WIL. Hold your tongue! I say 'tis bothersome and tiresome, and devilish costly.

HANS. Baron, I've begged you a hundred times to be done with that plaguey fool-play.

WIL. But what can I do?

HANS. Do? Say no, cut the knot, end it.

WIL. Faith, I think I will; faith, so!

FRITZ. My lord—

WIL. Tush! tush!

Enters Hilda from castle.

HILDA. What's this? Fritz sorrowful, my father moved,

The Chevalier again! What is this? What?

My father, you'll vouchsafe the Honey-Broth—
Is 't not so? You'll not break the ancient
usage!

HANS. Ancient? Ha, ha!

HILDA. Yes, ancient; deeds of heart take soon the
full

Of reverend antique grace. So is this feast
Ancient by Lady Bertha's heart, and the people's—

Most reverend, hoar, religious, dedicate.

HANS. Fine coddling!

HILDA. Bethink you, too, my father,
Bethink you that Count Osmond still is here,
A nobleman ancient, venerable, dear,
The honored consort of the sainted dame
Who first bestowed and then entailed forever
This friendly feast to cheer our yoemanry.
Spot not the antique silver of his head
With rusty riddance of the festival
Which his sweet lady made.

HANS. And when he's gone,
My Lady Hilda will persuade to feed
The rustic yokels for his memory.
Pah! If you could but cook his good fat fame
To make meat for the clowns, 'twere econom-
ical.

HILDA. Remember what a lovely pleasure 'tis—
No little thing—and ties their grateful souls
Unto our house; they love you for it fondly.

HANS. Ay, ay! And, Baron, shrewdly keep them
feeding;
Full-stomach love is empty-stomach hate.

WIL. Well, something in that. But still I fear to
break
Th' old custom—sooth, I have some cause to
fear it.

Well, something in that. Oh, let the fret go on.
I say, Fritz, order the Honey-Broth as usual.

HILDA. My dear, good father! Fritz, go bid Grun
wait
Wi' the aged Count for me—I'll not be long.

Fritz goes toward castle. Hilda turns to her
father, but immediately, after a suspicious look

at Hans, turns again toward Fritz and calls to him.

HILDA. Fritz!

FRITZ. My Lady!

Fritz stops and takes a step toward Hilda, but she has hastened to him. Meantime Hans has fallen to arguing with Wilbold, making emphatic and angry gestures.

HILDA. And, good Fritz, touching this same Honey-Broth,

See to 't 'tis good, as rich as ever 'twas.

FRITZ. My dear, good lady!

HILDA. Bless thy good soul, Fritz! We know th' Honey-Broth,

A rite how fair, religious, dear! See to 't!

Fritz goes again toward castle, and Hilda turns toward her father.

HANS. I tell you, Baron, the rogues laugh in their sleeves while they eat your pudding.

WIL. No, no, I think not so.

HANS. I know it, the scurvy clowns.

Hilda stops, turns and calls to Fritz, who as before turns and moves toward her, while Hilda goes to him. Hans continues his urgent gestures to Wilbold.

HILDA. And, Fritz, hasten to tell the village folk,
And bid them all to the tables. Go! make haste!

But first unto the noble Count and Grun—
Command my nurse as I have bidden you;
I must remain to watch that knavish Hans,
Lest he prevail to change my father's mind.

Speaks musingly, to herself.

Yet is it well to call the Chevalier knavish?

Methinks my mind—why is it?—hath suffered
change,
Some expeditious change, and I am new ;
My new heart sembles now a rich parterre,
Kind to a thousand flowers, as kind to weeds.

With a wave of hand to dismiss Fritz and hasten him, Hilda turns again toward Wilbold, and Fritz toward the castle.

WIL. Well, something in that! Something in that!
Ay, by my house! And faith, I'll not be pushed
by them. Fritz!

Fritz returns to Wilbold.

FRITZ. My lord?

WIL. I'll give no Honey-Broth.

FRITZ. My lord?

WIL. What are ears for? I say I will not give the
Honey-Broth.

FRITZ. My lord, may an old servant venture—

WIL. No!

FRITZ. Then pray you let your servant venture to
venture.

You will have peace, and so will all the spirits
That faithfully keep this castle, if you vouch-
safe

To show this ancient customary love.

HANS. Ancient again! Ha, ha!

WIL. Away, old steward! I have said!

HILDA. My father!

Go, Fritz, to the old Count and Grun.

Exit Fritz into the castle.

HILDA. My father,

You'll not drive me away—nay, frown not,
sir—

You'll smite no iron frown into a lock
To buckle my lips, whence now my soul will
out.

Bethink you, I have been all gentleness,
All duty, affectionate, obedient;
Yet now will I defy denial, and speak,
And you must hear me, must, I say, and ought,
You who have listened to this naughty knight
That spoils your honor, reverence, piety.

WIL. Hilda, have done!

HILDA. Yea, yea! when done is done,
Then will I too have done, but now I speak.
And why, sir, will I speak? To save my father,
My father own, whom I do love, from danger.

HANS. Danger! Ha, ha!

HILDA. Remember what befell

Two years ago—

WIL. Tut! tut!

HILDA. Two years, I say,

When you but only pinched the diet, and gave
But parsimoniously what had been rich,
And when next year you but bestowed the
broth,

Naught but the broth alone, no meats there-
with,

The angry Kobolds then ransacked the earth
For noises worst affrighting, foul and hateful,
And made the long night hideous in the castle.
You know you slept not by one wink that night,
And none else but th' aged Count and me;

Eke did they such a breakage in the house,
That when old Fritz cast up th' amount, it made
The very cost of the Honey-Broth to a penny.
What may they do, or rather what not do,
If now again you scorn the antique rite
On which they dote?

HANS. Pah! Here's no chronicle;

These are but dreams of tales, whisps, vapors.

WIL. I dreamt not that mad uproar, Chevalier.

HANS. Well, well, suppose 'tis so, what of 't?
Defy them!

WIL. Well, something in that. I own I'm not dis-
posed

To be dragooned to this preposterous pottage.

HANS. And I must tell you it is no girl's busi-
ness—

'Tis men's affair—be sovereign with your own.

WIL. Well something in that! I'll not be coaxed
too much.

HILDA. My father, remember it hath long been
said

The fame and fortune of our noble house
Hang like a shield on th' arm o' the Kobolds'
favor.

WIL. Well, something in that! I've oft heard
that, friend Hans.

HANS. Pooh! old wives' tales! Will you be made
a fool?

WIL. No, no, I'll not be fooled! I'll give no revels.

HILDA. Dear father, be not so prevailed upon
To make you stubborn in this matter, pray you!

WIL. Ha! What's that? Stubborn? What say you? Stubborn? Stubborn?

Out on the word! A disrespectful daughter!

HILDA. No, no! no disrespect; only to say—

WIL. But I say! That's enough! I'll give no feast—

Except to my friends! Ay, so! A happy thought!

I will defy your Kobolds with a banquet

Given my friends—Fritz!—to knights and ladies,

Fritz, Fritz, I say! Ay, and to-morrow, sooth, I' the teeth of this their pet enforced feast!

Why, Fritz!

Enters Fritz.

Go send abroad to all my friends,

Knights, ladies, to banquet here to-morrow night.

FRITZ. My lord!

WIL. Go do it, instantly! Look to it!

HILDA. My father—

WIL. Peace! I say I rule. No pottage!

Instead, I'll feast my friends to-morrow night.

And yet, good sooth, 'tis one thing to meet mortals,

But ticklish elves and vexed whimsical spirits,

These be different. You, what would you do

If droll or ghost confronted you, Chevalier?

HANS. I would conjure it! Ha! And never again The thing would dare adventure me, I promise.

Here Hans draws himself up fiercely to his utmost height and strikes his huge sword on the floor till it rings loudly.

HILDA. You would conjure it? Well, and so you shall—

HANS. Eh, what!

HILDA. Or may, or have at least a chance to prove
Your boast, big Chevalier. For they will come,
O yes, the Kobolds come, I know they will,
And wake the drowsy darkness with their
wrath

To-night—they'll not delay their angry sport.
Stay you now with my father, doughty Hans,
Stay here to-night, and help my father spar
With these same antic sprites and pinching
elves.

You shall conjure them, ah, you know, conjure
them!

Will you not stay?

HANS. Well, hem! my lady, no—

HILDA. What! no? But you'll conjure them, be-
think you, conjure them!

HANS. I have affairs at home.

HILDA. 'Tis early morn.

You may go thither, and return to-night.

HANS. Why two to fight with shadows? One's
enough.

HILDA. But to conjure them, Chevalier, conjure
them!

My father hath not caught that trick, to con-
jure them.

Will you desert your friend? Nay, come, con-
jure them!

For they will come, as sure as midnight, yes,

A-trooping through the halls with monstrous
riot,
Pound doors, shake screens, make creatures
hoot, winds howl!
But you'll conjure them, surely, ah! Conjure
them.

HANS. Nay, nay, I have some business at my castle—

I must be gone—'tis nothing, Baron, nothing.

Exit Hans, hastily.

HILDA. You see, my father, what he is, a coward;
He dare not stay.

WIL. Tut! tut!

HILDA. I say he quakes.

Will you be ruled by such a thing as he
Against your daughter's prayers?

WIL. Tut! tut! I say.

My mind is made—I'll give no Honey-Broth.

CURTAIN.

ACT III—SCENE 2.

SCENE—The great bed-chamber of the castle, the same as in Scene 2, Act I. The large and handsome bed is ready for use. It is night, a half-hour before midnight.

Wilbold is discovered, just ready for bed and two servants helping him, one holding a candle. The stage is amply lighted.

WIL. That will do. Off with you now. And, hark 'e—quiet in the house! D' ye hear? No tricks, no noise! By my faith, I never thought of it before, but mayhap the roaring fracas a year ago was made by you and your fellows to force the Honey-Broth from me.

FIRST SERVANT. My lord, my lord, can you think that of us?

SECOND SERVANT. My lord, do us not such wrong. We should be first bad and then mad to do such a thing.

WIL. Well, something in that. But look to it! I'll bear no pranks.

Wilbold lies down on the bed, the servants spread over him a light covering, suitable for summer weather, and go out carrying the candles, leaving the room very dark. Then begin ominous signs, dim lights of sundry colors flash about, low and rumbling sounds arise as if a storm were threatening, curious little faces appear and disappear in the walls. The noise grows louder and more grating, till the din becomes dreadful. It seems as if huge chains were dragged all over the castle floors, back and forth through the halls, up and down the

stairways, crashes and poundings break forth, the casements and doors rattle and there is loud knocking at them, outside dogs howl and bark, cats mew, owls hoot, and all the domestic animals add their voices affrighted. Wilbold is horribly terrified, alternately sitting up and lying down, putting up his head and hiding it under the covering, jumping out of bed and running to door or window at some especially loud and wild knocking or shaking or crash and roar. The room is kept light enough to show his movements plainly by the ominous flashes of colored lights here and there and the mocking little faces appearing and vanishing in the walls. Suddenly there is entire stillness, the silence is profound, all lights cease and the room is pitchy dark. A bell tolls midnight, striking twelve. Then a strange, weird, blueish light gradually fills the room, fades again, and all is ominously black. In the darkness a figure slowly becomes visible, very dimly, then more plainly, till suddenly a candle springs alight in the figure's hand, the room lights up, and the spirit of Lady Bertha is there. She slowly advances to the bed-side, where the terrified but fascinated Wilbold is shaking and staring, and a scroll unrolls in her hand, which is the deed of the Honey Broth executed by Lady Bertha. She holds up the scroll for Wilbold to read it, and lights it with the candle, and speaks:

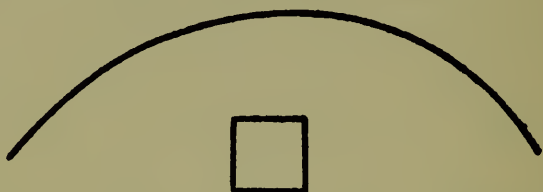
LADY B. Do what is here written.

Then the figure moves slowly backward to the middle of the room, still holding out the scroll lighted by the candle; then the candle is suddenly extinguished, the figure is gone, a dim blueish light pervades, which slowly becomes deep blackness. Then the din and roar begins again furiously.

CURTAIN.

ACT IV—SCENE 1.

SCENE—Late twilight of the next day. The great dining room of the castle. The long table is set brilliantly, for a banquet in rear center, in shape of a semi-ellipse, with a very small table in front, thus:



The little table is to be used for a splendid bunch of roses. Servants are putting the last touches to the banquet table. There is a wide window at rear, and two handsome double-doors, at sides, right and left.

FIRST SERVANT. The farm-hands are outside, to see the tables. Let 'em in, lad.

Exit a servant.

SECOND SERVANT. Ay, poor chappies, that's all they'll get of it. We inside can pick a little.

Enter farm hands.

FIRST FARM. By the saints, but 'tis a fine board!

FIRST SERVANT. Is it not, masters.

SECOND FARM. Ah-h-h! No honey-broth for us poor folks yesterday, but riot for the quality to-day.

THIRD FARM. Well, they do say my lord the Baron had little sleep last night.

FIRST FARM. You house-lads can tell us what happened.

FIRST SERVANT. What happened outside?

SECOND FARM. The very devil happened—such a hellish roar was never heard.

THIRD FARM. Ugh! it makes me quake now to tell of it. Naught that could make a noise was still.

SECOND FARM. Except the babies.

THIRD FARM. Ay, the babies! 'Twas strange they all slept so in the din.

FIRST FARM. Din, say you? 'Twas a fury of crashing and brawling. All the cattle lowed, all the sheep bleated, all the pigs squealed, all the dogs howled, all the cats mewed, and all the owls hooted.

SECOND FARM. And all the jacks brayed—ye forget the jacks.

FIRST FARM. Sooth, yes, jacks and jennies too—brayed like trumpets all night.

THIRD FARM. And thunder rolled around the sky like a groaning wheel.

SECOND FARM. But no lightning.

FIRST FARM. No, nor any light. I never knew it so dark. You could feel the night on your cheek like a black powder.

THIRD FARM. But did ye note that just at midnight 'twas suddenly still awhile?

SECOND FARM. Ay, like a clap of silence—then the racket began again worse than ever.

FIRST FARM. Now, what happened in the house, lads?

FIRST SERVANT. Ghosts.

ALL FARM. Ghosts?

FIRST SERVANT. Ay! Kobolds, pixies, brownies, elves.

SECOND SERVANT. And they say Lady Bertha walks sometimes.

FIRST FARM. Ugh! I be afeared of those things when I talk of 'em.

SECOND SERVANT. Better say people or spirits, not things. 'Tis said they pinch folks that speak ill of them.

FIRST FARM. Ugh!

SDCOND FARM. But what did they in the house?

FIRST SERVANT. A worse hubbub than all your squealing, howling and hooting creatures.

THIRD FARM. No?

SECOND SERVANT. Ay, they did.

SECOND FARM. But what?

FIRST SERVANT. Beating at all the casements and rattling 'em like wind and rain, knocking on all the doors and opening and shutting and slamming 'em, no matter how locked, and a crashing and grinding everywhere, as if terrible chains were dragged up and down the stairways and thrown over and tin pans thrown about, and furniture breaking up, and a pounding on the floors like ten thousand canes a-dancing and stamping.

SECOND FARM. And blueish light?

SECOND SERVANT. No light at all—dark as a pocket—nothing but the roaring and pounding.

FIRST FARM. Ugh!

Sounds of a cane on the floor outside at left, and all the farm hands and servants retreat to right side with signs and sounds of superstitious fright. Enters Count Osmond, left, and walks slowly half way across the room, pauses, and looks about uncertainly:

COUNT O. Have you seen her?

A murmur of fear, awe, confusion, among the servants.

COUNT O. Have you seen her?

FIRST SERVANT (*Advancing*). Seen whom, my lord?

COUNT O. The beautiful spirit that comes to me and waits on me.

FIRST SERVANT (*Retreating*). No, my lord.

At mention of the spirit the servants have huddled closer together and watch the old Count with evident fear. He turns and goes slowly back, and exit left.

FIRST FARM. What is that spirit he spoke of?

FIRST SERVANT. I never heard of it.

SECOND FARM. Mark you, he called it a fair spirit.

THIRD FARM. Ay, but one man's fair is another man's foul.

SECOND FARM. Sooth so. I think the same bogie might pat the old Count on his head and take me a pinch o' the buttocks.

FIRST FARM. Ay, mind you when goody Gammer was left with a babe an hour old while her man went to the drink-place; when he came back boozy, a hobgoblin lass was tending his wife, and she took him such a cuff on the ear

as knocked him flat, and sober, too. Now pick you up and take care of your woman, quoth she, and vanished in a blue mist; but they say her voice was as sweet as her hand was heavy.

The farm hands and servants have been moving bit by bit to the center, deeply interested in their ghost-talk and looking about and at one another fearsomely. Hilda enters, right, unnoticed, and comes close to them.

HILDA. Have you seen the old Count? I am looking for him.

With startled murmurs and looks the men all huddle over to the left. Enters Fritz, right.

HILDA. What is the matter, my good men? Am I so frightful?

FIRST FARM. The Lady Hilda!

SECOND FARM. Ay, Lady Hilda!

ALL FARM. Save you, ma'am!

FRITZ. Now what are you fellows doing here?

FIRST FARM. Please, sir, we were let in to see the tables.

FRITZ. Well, you have seen them. Off with you.

Exeunt the farmers awkwardly, left. The servants retire to the banquet table.

HILDA. Fritz, the aged Count?

FRITZ. I saw him but now, my lady, with Grun, who cares for him.

HILDA. That is well. I must oversee the table.

Hilda surveys all carefully, changes place of two or three things, meantime saying:

HILDA. Spread the candles, lads—there are too many in the middle. So. That is well. No

need to wait here; one of you bring soon a large, dewy bunch of red and white roses.

Exeunt servants, right.

FRITZ. I wish the gentle folks a pleasant banquet, my lady; but 'tis a sad business.

HILDA. 'Tis indeed, my good Fritz; I have no heart in it.

FRITZ. I have not asked of your health, my lady, after last night.

HILDA. Last night?

FRITZ. Last night, indeed—all night long—the wild uproar they made.

HILDA. Wild uproar? And *who* are *they*?

FRITZ. The angry Kobolds. Surely, my lady, you heard their terrible noises?

HILDA. Not a sound, Fritz.

FRITZ. And slept?

HILDA. Indeed I did.

FRITZ. No one else did.

HILDA. Yes, the aged Count. I awaked once and rose, and stole to his bedside, as my wont is, and there he lay in his venerable beauty, slumbering as softly as a child, as I too had slept, and then did, falling at once asleep again.

FRITZ. Most wonderful! At what time was that?

HILDA. Just midnight.

FRITZ. Ah! the truce-time, and visit-time.

HILDA. Truce? and visit?

FRITZ. Yes, my lady; just at midnight the horrible clamor suddenly ceased for a few minutes, and

Lady Bertha's spirit visited your father.

HILDA. Fritz! Of all this he has said not a word to me.

FRITZ. He told me, my lady; but words recked little—his pale and haggard face told enough. But with the morning he grew stubborn again, saving your presence, my lady, and swore he would outface them all, and ordered that this banquet go on in defiance.

HILDA. But how slumbered I through such a battle?

FRITZ. The Kobolds must have charmed your sleep, and the Count's, too—they love you both.

HILDA. My poor father, what can misguide him so?

FRITZ. A small name, but a big load of earth.

HILDA. Unriddle me that, good Fritz.

FRITZ. Hans—asking pardon.

HILDA. You need not ask pardon.

FRITZ. 'Tis not for me to speak ill of a knight.

HILDA. Of Hans to me you may say what you please.

FRITZ. Why then, my lady, I'll take comfort to call him what he is, a cowardly braggart, and a bad genius to your father.

HILDA. Yes, he is both at present, and he will be one as long as he lives; but I think I shall win my father from him.

FRITZ. If I might have an old servant's leave—

HILDA. Of course, Fritz.

FRITZ. Why, then, I will tell your ladyship how beautiful you are, and noble! You have changed suddenly and wondrously to my old eyes, "put away childish things," as the good book says, and become a woman in a day.

HILDA. Oh! Fritz, Fritz! I have a dream in my heart!

FRITZ. Of such dreams come such changes. But now I must tell you that the raging clatter of the Kobolds was not the only strange thing that befell last night.

For some months past it hath been noised
abroad

That a new knight hath suddenly appeared,
Most dexterous, brave, beautiful, honorable,
Who hath been like some eagle flying through
A banquet, in fro' th' dark and out to th' dark,
Or like a crested star transported thwart
A circle of the heavens, beheld and gone.

So enters he a parliament of knights,
Hath jousted and done wonders in the lists,
Then disappears, unknown, unnamed, unques-
tioned,

But with each sudden presence the better famed
For gallantry and grace and feats of arms,
And rich caparison and noble steed.

Now come two wonders touching this same
knight:

One wonder is that twice he hath been seen,
Full armed, with lance aloft, but visor up,
Showing a youthful face most brave, fair, gen-
tle,

A-through this little village galloping.
The other miracle methinks I sole
Have seen, for none this day my hints hath
answered;
But certain 'tis that I last night beheld
That unknown hero, horsed, in arms complete,
Erected like a statue on yon peak
Pedestaled, moveless as a figure carved,
And bronzed in the full rondure of the moon,
Whose golden quiet beams were spread above
The horrid and black din that clung to the
earth—
There stood, I say, that noble wondrous knight,
Gazing at your high window steadily,
Which that one height commands.

HILDA. Marvels indeed!

Before my window? And no name is known?

FRITZ. Not certainly; rumor hath called him Tor-
ald.

HILDA. Alas! my dreaming soul! Else my most
seeming

Vision that actual was! What can I think?

During this talk between Hilda and Fritz it has grown dusk. Enters Wilbold, and enter servants who light lamps, and exeunt. Wilbold looks haggard and wretched, and also somewhat sheep-faced after the fearful tumult and his still more fearful visit from Lady Bertha; but he is also angry and more stubborn than ever.

WIL. Fritz!

FRITZ. My lord—

WIL. As to this thing the Honey-Broth, you have
told me there is an enforcing deed hid in the

castle's archives? Is it true?

FRITZ. My lord!

WIL. Nay, no ceremony. I say, Is it true?

FRITZ. My lord, I am an old man and speak the truth.

WIL. Well, something in that. Bring me the deed.

Exit Fritz.

WIL. Well, Hilda, child, what of that business near

My heart?

HILDA. What is that business, father?

WIL. What!

Nay, nay, pretend not ignorance, yet blush
Confession; although I think your blush is
harsh,

The crimson of anger, not the pretty pink
Of sweet and lovely shame. What is the mat-
ter?

HILDA. I will not marry Hans.

WIL. *Will* not? Bold words!

HILDA. You said you would not force me.

WIL. Why, that's true.

But have you reasoned of 't?

HILDA. Oh, very well.

WIL. A bold, rich knight—there's reason, my wish
—there's reason.

HILDA. And that I love him not—there's better
reason.

WIL. Tush! tush!

Hilda is silent. Wilbold looks at her askance
a moment.

WIL. I say, tush! tush!

HILDA. What can I answer?

Bethink you, father, that when I wed I promise
To give all that I am, or can be, or have—
Which doth include my love, my utmost love,
Oh, my most fervent love, religious love!
If then I marry loveless, 'tis my lie;
And if I wed unloved, another's lie;
And both of these in one are monstrous, base!
I will not do it.

WIL. Tush! tush! I say again.

And tush it is—a whimsy, rubbish, stuff!
Now, hark 'e, Hilda—I married your mother
kindly,
But not in love, I never was in love.
But kindly, and so I was—and she was happy.

HILDA. Ah! *Was* she happy?

WIL. Yes! Who says not?

HILDA. I do!

WIL. Hilda!

HILDA. My lord Wilbold and father, in me
Behold a new-made thing, that is, but was not,
A woman, but was not, my mother's child, but
was not.

I am as a sorry shrub, a wayside weed
That, bulging under soil to two tap roots,
Then suddenly puts forth a glorious bloom
That travelers nor itself conceived lay in 't.
One root's in a dream, one spears my mother's
grave.

My mother died when I was seven years old—

I think 'tis so you tell me.

WIL. Ay, 'tis so.

HILDA. And that is thirteen years ago.

WIL. Yes, child.

HILDA. And you remember, sir, how suddenly
At twelve years old I fevered to learn Latin?

WIL. Yes, yes.

HILDA. You never asked the cause.

WIL. The cause?

HILDA. Yes! Rummaging by chance in an old
chest,

I found my mother's journal, writ in Latin;
That's why I studied.

WIL. Well, she was ever a scholar.

HILDA. Over and over I read that diary,
With glossary painfully picking out the words,
With grammar the meaning, until I had it by
heart.

In all those years I learned the language well—
You know that, father—and conned those sa-
cred pages

With skill grammatical; yet understood not
The heart o' the words, albeit the phrase was
plain.

At last, but now, I dreamed—or was 't a
dream?

Thing dreamed or actual, I cannot tell;
But dream or act, I came from it a woman!
And then I understood my mother's book,
And knew the meaning of those mystical em-
blems.

WIL. Well, well, well, well, well, well, well, well—
what now?

HILDA. You say she was a happy wife. Not so!
Her words, now burning for me, blaze with
the soul

Of a heart-hungry woman! Of that she died,
Starved in her soul and with starvation shamed
To death. And I her girl am warned of her,
Warned of my blessed mother pitifully.

I will not wed unloving, nor unloved.

WIL. Well, love him then. He swears that he
loves you.

HILDA. The Chevalier loves nothing but himself.

WIL. Tush! tush!

Notwithstanding Wilbold's trifling manner, he is moved by Hilda's words and manner and cannot help showing it. Hilda herself ends with much emotion. Enters a servant bearing a large mass of roses. Hilda receives them, hides her face behind them, then turns away and arranges the roses in a large bowl or vase on the small table. Enters Fritz, with the parchment.

FRITZ. The deed, my lord.

WIL. Unroll it.

Wilbold turns away. Fritz unrolls the parchment and holds it out toward Wilbold. Wilbold turns slowly, looks at the parchment keenly, starts visibly and recoils a pace or two.

WIL. 'Tis the same!

FRITZ. What same, my lord?

WIL. The same the ghost showed me last night.

FRITZ. Indeed, so, if any; there is but one deed,
and this is it.

WIL. Away with it!

FRITZ. Oh, my Lord Wilbold, if an old servant
may—

WIL. Away! No, give it me! I'll tear it.

Fritz puts the parchment behind his back.

WIL. Give it me, I say!

Fritz slowly and tremblingly brings forward the paper, and is about to yield it to Wilbold, when Hilda, who has turned from the roses, rushes forward, snatches the deed and clasps it to her breast. Fritz moves a little back and to side. Hilda stands drawn to her height, confronting Wilbold.

HILDA. My lord father, you will tear me first!

Enters servant.

SERVANT. My lord Baron, the guests have arrived
and are ready.

WIL. Show them in.

Hilda hands the deed to Fritz, who exit with it. The servant throws wide open the double doors at left, goes out and immediately returns, ushering in knights and ladies, the Chevalier Hans with them. Hilda goes to meet them as they enter, receiving them with gracious courtesy, speaking and curtsying to each and so passing them on to Wilbold.

HILDA. Welcome all! My Lord and Lady of Steffhausen, you are reverently welcome. Sir Philip and Lady Ellen, your presence is gratefully desired. Sir Heinrich and Lady Gertrude, have as much pleasure to be here, I pray you, as it is pleasure to receive you. Chevalier Hans, you are a near neighbor and have a lodge here whenever you favor my father. My Lord and Lady of Sevenberg, you bring a grace to challenge any welcome. Sir Gerhardt and Lady

Elizabeth, you live not far and you come near in friendship. Sir Ludwig and Lady of Alsen, I thank you for your presence which is most welcome. My Lords and Ladies of Wandorf, of Amberg, of Barby, of Camentzburg, of Dahlenberg, of Fohr, know all what favor you bestow and accept greeting. And the same with all truth and good will to you, knights and ladies of Hohenburg, Zahlstaufen and Verden.

WIL. Brave knights and fair ladies, belike you think my summons rather sudden.

ONE OF GUESTS. Faith, my Lord Wilbold, we had to make speed.

WIL. And I will tell you how it happened so.

HILDA. But first, my father, let us seat our friends. Please take your own place. I will take leave to sit at my father's left. Chevalier, as a near neighbor, will you take the right. Venerable and honored Lord and Lady of Steffhausen, will you sit next me? Sir Philip and Lady Ellen, will you honor the Chevalier? And all brave and fair friends, will you take places as may please you at this very off-hand regalement?

They all place themselves at table, Wilbold at the head at the middle and the others to right and left. One servant is present, behind Wilbold's chair. When seated:

WIL. Neighbors and friends, knights and ladies, in the matter of this sudden summons—

A horn or bugle call is heard, outside, and all at the table give attention to it. Enters servant.

SERVANT. My lord Baron, there is a stranger knight at the gate, demanding hospitality.

WIL. Troth, the gallant has a good nose. Give him water and bid him in, and say we will not call dinner till he comes.

Exit servant.

WIL. In the matter, I say, of this sudden summons, I am much beholden to you for your kind and ready presence. Now, the occasion of it is a certain old custom here, a yearly feast given to the peasantry and vassals of Wistgaw, called the Lady Bertha's Honey-Broth.

HANS. We all know about the Honey-Broth, Baron.

WIL. Good. But perhaps you do not know that all the ghosts, elves, and hobgoblins of the world seem to dote on the custom. Now, I have tired of gorging a crowd of yokels once a year, and so I pared down the feast a year ago, and, if you will credit me, the rascal elves, Kobolds, and ghosts, I know not what, made a noise at night and broke up my furniture to the exact cost of the usual feast. This year, not to be made a fool, henchman and cup-bearer in my own castle, I defied all their ghostships and gave no Honey-Broth at all; whereupon, last night the rogue spirits made such a din and did such crashing and pounding and breaking that what with the knocking at casements and banging of doors and cracking-up of furniture and howling, hooting and yelling of all the cattle and creatures, you would have sup-

posed Bedlam had broken loose in the castle and out.

HANS. Oh, Baron, this is too childish, green and innocent!

WIL. You may pish and pshaw all you please, Chevalier, but that is what happened; and furthermore, a devilish unpleasant ghost, supposed to be Lady Bertha, visited me at midnight, with a candle in her hand, and commanded me to give the Honey-Broth.

HANS. Oh, Baron!

WIL. I'll not deny I was shaken; but at dawn I swore I'd not wear cap and bells for all their spookships, and called you all hither that I might give this pot-luck in defiance of all the bogies, and also that your lodgement in the castle to-night might quell the varlet nixes, though I think they'll rap no more for another year.

HANS. By my head, my Lord Baron, you educate cheek, chin, brow, eyes and nose.

WIL. How's that, Chevalier?

HANS. In keeping a straight face, Baron.

Hilda rises.

HILDA. You know too much or not enough, Chevalier,

Too much for mortals, or not enough for you.

My noble friends, I wish I might prevail

To move your intercession with my father.

They tell me 'twas a very horrible din,

Yet slumbered I, not tost, rocked by the noise

Like to a sea bird on a roaring wave ;
From which I gather the spirits have no ire
Against our house, but only will enforce
The Lady Bertha's pledge perpetual.
Is't not a goodly wont, first in itself,
Blithe charity, and then by age? Lords, ladies,
Move ye my father to give the Honey-Broth,
For me, our folk, the sprites, appeasing all.

A servant opens the door left and Torald enters, advances toward the front and greets the company with a courtly bow, at which all the company rise. Hilda, at first glance, has paled, trembled, and as the company stand she sinks into her chair, and under cover of their attention to the knight she presses hands on brow, temples and eyes as if to make sure she is awake and then flushing and trembling stares at Torald.

TORALD. My gracious lord Baron, I perceive this is very high company, as it must be at Wistgaw ; but I am sure your goodness of heart will make me no intruder, though uninvited and a wayfarer. I am an honorable Knight, my lord.

WIL. By my faith, Sir Knight, your words but repeat your face and bearing. You are right welcome. Tell us your name.

TORALD. I am called the Chevalier Torald.

On hearing that name the company murmur and look at each other, and then gaze on the knight with respect and admiration.

WIL. Your fame has come to Wistgaw before you ; like a trusty herald, Chevalier.

Hilda rises and with effort commands her emotion, yet not wholly.

HILDA. My lord father, shall I yield my place

by you to grace the honorable stranger?

TORALD. By no means, gentle and lovely lady. I will seat me here.

Torald goes to seat at foot of table, left, and all are seated again.

WIL. Now call the dinner.

HANS. A moment, Baron; let us finish this matter of the Honey-Broth, with leave of your new guest.

TORALD. I have heard much of the Lady Bertha's Honey-Broth—a far-famed festival.

HANS. This I say, friend Baron, as I have said before to you, and now to all these Knights and high dames, that I would give not one spoon-sip of Honey-Broth to these yokels, not I, nor be troubled with rogue ghosts and nixes, either, if there be any such things.

WIL. And what would you do with the ghosts and urchins, Chevalier Hans?

HANS. I would conjure them, my lord Baron, so that it should please them to scramble out of my way in a thrice.

WIL. A bold word taken up! Look you now, Chevalier, appease the Spirit of Lady Bertha, and pack off the Kobolds, and I'll give you anything you ask.

HANS. Anything?

WIL. Yes, by all the line of Wistgaw, anything.

HANS. Have a care—anything?

WIL. I have said it.

HANS. Even the Lady Hilda's hand?

WIL. Well—I have said it.

Here there is great stir among the guests, and Torald, leaning forward, gazes sternly at Hans. Hilda is greatly distressed.

HILDA. My lord father!

WIL. I say yes, Hilda; my word is passed.

HILDA. But I had your word first, my father; you said you would not compel me.

WIL. Why—yes; but that was only a fatherly intention, not a Baron's promise, a Knight's word.

Hilda leaves the table in tears and agitation and goes to door right.

WIL. Hilda, why away? Stay here, with our guests, where your place is!

Hilda returns slowly from the door toward front and center.

HILDA. 'Tis true, my father, here's my place and duty—

I'll sit in one, submit me to the other;

And that I would have fled from either, forgive.

The heart-quake of a frightened desolate girl
O'erthrew my towers and left my manners un-
chambered.

I crave the pardon of all. But, oh! to whom,
To whom, to what or whither can I appeal,
My lords and ladies, in this case so hard?

Not to my father,—he pleads his knightly word;
And not to you, his peers in custom leagued,
Parents yourselves, whose girls must not rebel.

I'd gladly vanish in my mother's bosom,
Or willingly invoke the Lady Bertha,
My blessed ancestress, than whom no soul

More saintly, ever lived on earth or went to
heaven;

Ay, or the Kobolds, faithful elves, her friends,
Friends of our house, let who say what who
will;

On all things heavenly, earthly, or dreamed of
men,

I may with warrant call! And this I say,
I will not, will not, wed the Chevalier Hans,
Will not—nay, I'll be torn with pincers first
And die by shreds.

WIL. Hilda, too much! Be done!

TORALD. My lord Baron, a word. Will you grant
the same offer to another, even to me, when
the Chevalier Hans fails?

HANS. How? Fails? By my head, sir, say you
I shall fail?

TORALD. Yes, Chevalier, you will fail.

HANS. By my sword, Baron, your new acquaint-
ance is troubled with a frankness that smacks
of something else.

TORALD. No reflection. Chevalier. I say you will
fail because you undertake what no man can do.

HANS. Why, sir, 'tis no man's part to say what
I can do.

TORALD. I ask you, my lord Baron, if you will
grant me the same great and heavenly offer,
if the Chevalier Hans fails?

WIL. Your knightly fame is ample, Sir Torald,
but I know naught of your family.

TORALD. I will satisfy you on that score, Baron;

indeed, I will show you that I share your own worth—I mean, we are kin.

WIL. Why on that understanding, Sir Torald, yes, my daughter awaits you on the same terms promised the Chevalier Hans.

Hilda clasps her hands, bows her head and falls tremblingly on her knees at the small table, half hidden from Torald by the roses.

WIL. But how is this, Sir Torald! Just now you said my friend Hans undertakes what no man can do, yet you essay the same thing.

TORALD. Not quite the same, Baron, for I honor the Honey-Broth.

WIL. I will promise no Honey-Broth.

TORALD. But I will promise it.

WIL. Sooth, I must own you speak riddles, and riddles not all to my mind.

TORALD. I crave your patience for a few hours, Baron.

Torald goes to Hilda, takes her hand and lifts her up.

TORALD. And I will win this heavenly maid, and then give her back to herself, for her to make her own gift of herself to whom she will, and if to me, high Heaven be praised! Dear lady let me lead you to your place.

Torald leads Hilda in courtly manner to Wilbold's left hand and returns to his own seat at left end of table. Hans has been showing a doubtful mind, in fact, his fears are rising.

HANS. You may think, Baron Wilbold, that the first trial belongs by courtesy to your stranger guest, and I think so too, and will—

WIL. By no means, friend Hans. The first trial is yours.

HANS. But I will yield the advantage.

TORALD. I will accept it.

WIL. I say no, Chevalier. All shall be as first declared.

HANS. Well, well, 'tis small matter—nonsense, anyway—the spirits will not come.

TORALD. You are mistaken, Chevalier, they will come.

Hans is sorely frightened, turns pale and is silenced.

WIL. 'Tis all determined, and friend Hans will make trial of the spirits this very night in the great bed chamber of the castle. And now call the dinner; but first bring red wine and fill all the glasses.

Exit servant who at once re-enters with others who carry decanters of wine from which they fill the goblets on the table. Wilbold stands and then Hilda rises by his side, they lift their glasses, the servants are grouped, the guests postured and follows a long tableau.

CURTAIN.

ACT IV—SCENE 2.

SCENE—The great bed chamber of the castle, same as Act I—Scene 2. The stage is utterly dark and black. Enters a servant carrying a small torch, and the stage lights up dimly, yet so as to make things plainly visible. Enter then Fritz and servants.

FRITZ. Light up the big lamp, lad.

The servant carrying the torch kindles the lamp, and the stage at once is amply lighted.

FRITZ. Now lay wood, and kindle a fire.

FIRST SERV. Why, 'tis good summer weather.

FRITZ. Ay, by day, but 'tis chilly to-night, and so the Baron orders.

Servants lay and kindle a fire in the great chimney, which soon blazes up brightly. Meanwhile:

FIRST SERV. What o'clock may it be?

FRITZ. It lacks a half of midnight.

SECOND SERV. 'Tis a strange freak, this, Master Steward.

FRITZ. Nay, that big boaster, Chevalier Hans, got well trapped in his own bluster.

SECOND SERV. And will the Kobolds come?

FRITZ. Sooth, they will, depend on it; the sturdy sprites will not be wanting at a challenge.

Enter Wilbold, several knights and ladies and Hans. Hans is in full armor, with hugh sword and a poniard. Wilbold carries a large key.

WIL. By all the stones of Wistgaw, friend Hans, methinks you are Fortune's baby. 'Tis not every Chevalier that has chance to win spurs and watch his arms twice, once against this world and once against another. You will be in a sorry plight to-morrow morning, or else I will clap you o' the shoulder as a twice-belted knight.

HANS. By all the bogies, Baron Wilbold, that ever were, or never were, how many knightings would you have? Methinks one is enough. But as you are minded to this foolery, so be it; have the flat of your sword ready in the morning.

WIL. My sword is ready, and my good will too, which I leave with you, my dear Hans. No one can come or go by yonder balcony—'tis a dizzy height of sheer smooth wall; and I will double-lock this door and keep the key myself. So good night, Chevalier—a good night indeed!

Exit Wilbold, and all with him, the locking of the door is heard and Hans is left alone. He looks around him slowly, with evident fear, but with effort to keep his courage up.

HANS. If I could get out now and get in at dawn, that would suit my humor.

He examines and pulls at the door softly, looks up and down the walls, sounding them here and there, looks out through the balcony door and turns away with a shudder, examines the chimney and fireplace.

HANS. Caged, that's certain. But if I can not get out, no one can get in. Good! Spirits? Pooh, pooh! But they all tell of them. Pooh, pooh! I never saw one.

Hans starts suddenly and stares at the door, then starts again and whirls around and stares at the balcony door.

HANS. Pooh, pooh! If they come, they come—ugh! But if they come not—pooh, pooh! ha! —I will have a fine battle to tell in the morning, and win the pretty Hilda, who, methinks, will not be so pert after a little.

Hans sits down in the big arm-chair. A bell slowly strikes twelve. A loud knock sounds from the door. Hans half starts from the chair, leaning on it, and half whirls around toward the door, shaking. The doors of the balcony fly open, with a dismal, long wail of the wind. Hans runs to the doors and closes them, leaning his weight against them. A noise is heard at the chimney. Hans runs and throws wood on the fire, which flashes up brightly. But at the same moment a wide plank appears, pushing out from the chimney over the flames, advancing in a long slant to the floor. Hans retreats before it and sinks into the arm-chair again. The plank coming to rest and forming a bridge over the flames, a company of Kobolds, flying a banner and pennants, come marching down the plank, and in the middle walks King Kohlibran. Yoho marches a little to one side behind the King. Some of the Kobolds carry trumpets. They descend the plank to the floor, marching in admirable order to music of the trumpets. They march once around the room, and then move toward Hans, who backs his chair away till the wall stops his further retreat. Then the Kobolds halt, the music ceases, and the King advances near Hans. Yoho follows.

KOHL. Chevalier Hans, we are informed of your boast that you will conjure and drive away the spirits of the Castle of Wistgaw, and we have heard your valor and prowess much famed. True, it was famed by yourself, but as a true knight can speak only the truth, we must be-

lieve you are a doughty warrior. Therefore, the spirit of Lady Bertha allows me to meet you in her place, to do battle with you; and she promises, and I promise for the Kobolds, that if you overcome me, we will depart from this castle and never return. I challenge you to combat—there lies my glove.

Kohlibran throws at the Chevalier's feet a very diminutive gauntlet, and the trumpets sound a martial flourish. Hans stares at his small enemy, picks up the glove, sets it on his little finger and regards it with a smile of reviving bravado.

YOHÖ. By our Kobold's hill, Unkie, you were a good Unkie to let me come with you. For now I see why the big Chevalier was made so big, to wit, to show off your majesty's glove. Sooth, it sits his little finger neatly, like a spry bird on a twig of a gnarled old tree.

KOHL. Well, Chevalier Hans, do you accept my challenge?

HANS. But with what shall we fight, my pretty manikin?

KOHL. Each with his usual weapon, you with your sword, I with my whip.

HANS. What! With your whip?

KOHL. Yes, 'tis my ordinary weapon; for as I am a small being, I require a long reach.

At this Hans laughs derisively.

HANS. Do you mean to fight me with a whip?

KOHL. Assuredly. Have I not told you 'tis my weapon?

HANS. And you will use no other?

KOHL. No.

HANS. You promise me.

KOHL. On the word of a Knight and King.

Hans chuckles more derisively than before.

HANS. Then I accept your challenge.

Kohlibran speaks to two Kobolds, who immediately melt into the wall and disappear. Meantime Yoho advances and makes a low ironical bow to Hans.

HANS. Motley, what's your business?

YOH0. To advise the Chevalier to beware—

HANS. Beware? Ha!—

YOH0. Of King Kohlibran's whip.

HANS. Pah! Go to!

YOH0. 'Tis a fiery thing.

HANS. Belike you have felt it.

YOH0. 'Tis for his foes, the Kobolds' foes, Lady Bertha's foes. You will feel it.

HANS. Away, motley manikin!

YOH0. As your excellency pleases—which will be to howl very soon. The whip has five lashes of fine gold chains, each ending with a diamond as large as a pea, which will pierce your pretty armor as 'twere paste, and cut and sting your flesh horribly. Go your way!

HANS. Bah! Begin when you will.

KOHL. 'Tis surely known to you, Sir Knight,
That when a hero is to fight,
He prays it be beneath the beams
Of th' eyes o' the lady of his dreams;
By her sweet praise and sweeter eyes

He doth his deeds of best emprise.
Therefore, my servants have I sent
With this most knightly true intent,
To bring her by our fairy ways,
Your valor both to raise and praise.
The Lady Hilda had not slept
But pious watch at window kept,
Sweet vigils, filled with maiden prayer
Not whispered even to the air.
To slumber charmed, they lead her here,
And now she comes, she doth appear ;
Of what avail are human locks
Whenas a canty fairy knocks !

The great doors fly open of themselves and the two Kobolds enter backward, beckoning and charming Hilda onward, who comes walking in sleep, eyes closed. The doors shut, the large chair still is close against the wall, and the Kobolds guide Hilda and seat her in the chair. Thus a clear space is left for the encounter. Kohlibran turns to Hans.

KOHL. Ready. Draw, Chevalier. Yoho, bring me my whip.

Yoho comes with the whip. As he passes Hans he stops and shows the whip to him.

YOH0. Look, big Hans ! Here are the big diamonds I told you of. I tell you again they will go through your armor like light through glass. You'll think a thousand wasps and a hundred cats are clawing and stinging you. But go your way. Speak not to the fool according to his folly. Ho ! ho !

KOHL. Yoho !

Yoho runs to Kohlibran and delivers the whip.

YOH0. Pardon, Unkie, I hardly could get around

the Chevalier Mountain.

KOHL. Mountain?

YOHÖ. Truly—so big a load of earth, and nothing at the peak of it. Oh, Unkie!

Kohlibran goes to Hilda, and waves his hands gently over her head.

KOHL. Awake! Yet let this pageant seem
The medley of a half-waked dream!

Hilda opens her eyes.

KOHL. Now, Chevalier, have at you!

The trumpets again sound a flourish. Kohlibran approaches Hans, threatening with his whip. Hans aims and strikes a terrific blow at Kohlibran, but the nimble Kobold leaps aside, the sweep of the huge sword swings Hans completely around, and the King brings down his whip on Hans' back. Hans starts violently, utters a cry, and claps his hands to his back, letting his sword fall. The trumpets cease.

KOHL. Recover your sword, Chevalier; but if you lose it again, I'll not hold for you.

With a very wry and raging and frightened face, Hans picks up his sword, the trumpets sound, and the fight goes on. Soon Hans strikes a furious blow downward, which Kohlibran avoids, and the sword sticks fast in the floor. While Hans tries to withdraw it, Kohlibran falls on him with the whip and so lashes him that soon Hans forsakes his sword and runs away, writhing and howling. Kohlibran pursues him around the room, up and down over the furniture and bed, as he tries to escape the lash, and at last Hans falls on his knees, begging mercy. The trumpets cease. During this affray, Hilda has been very highly amused and yet pitifully concerned, too.

KOHL. Chevalier Hans, you are no better than an old woman. Armor, sword and poniard be-

come you not. You should have a gown, a distaff and a spindle.

The trumpets play gaily but softly. Kohlibran signs to the Kobolds, who surround Hans, take off his armor bit by bit, and place the pieces with the sword and poniard on the floor. Kohlibran waves his hand over them, they disappear, and in their place is a heap of women's garments, in which the Kobolds dress Hans, including the tying on of a cap which looks grotesque with his fierce moustache. A distaff with a spindle is put into Hans' girdle. Then the Kobolds hold their sides and sway with merry laughter and jeers which make a harmony with the trumpet music. Hilda is merry too, yet again pitiful.

KOHL. Seat him, hide him, and steep him in slumber.

Hans is led to a chair in a corner, seated, charmed to sleep by the waving of the Kobolds' hands, and a screen drawn around him.

KOHL. This hath been brief and easy. Time
Still waits before the sun will climb
Over our hill. Torald shall take
His watch this self-same night, and make
Once more the Honey-Broth secure,
And Lady Bertha's deed endure.
This night no moment doth he sleep
But vigil worshipful doth keep
Upon the lone and chilly height
From which he can with true love's sight
The Lady Hilda's window see.
Go bring him hither instantly.

Two Kobolds immediately melt into the wall and disappear.

KOHL. Charm back the maiden slumbering,
Then leave her waked and wondering.

Two Kobolds charm Hilda to sleep by waving their hands around her, then beckon and charm her away through the great doors, which open for them and close again. Then the two Kobolds and Torald are seen slowly floating down through the air onto the balcony.

YHOH. Here he comes, like a buzzard.

KOHL. A buzzard? How now, Knave.

YHOH. A buzzard is but a bird, and birds come through the air. Oh, Unkie!

The glass doors open and Torald enters. Kobolds move the big chair from the wall to center. Kohlibran and all the Kobolds salute Torald kindly, but silently, with fingers on lips, then melt away into the stone wall till all are gone and Torald is alone.

TOR. Truly my friends the Kobolds have their own ways. I think I am to have my trial-watch to-night. Good! The sooner to woo the lovely Lady Hilda. What have they done with the Chevalier Hans I wonder? Well, I have only to wait, and if I sleep, 'tis well in this manner of watch.

Torald extinguishes the lamp, the stage becomes slightly dim. He sits in the great chair. The fire is dying down, and the stage grows dimmer. Torald sleeps. The fire flickers and goes out, and the stage becomes densely dark. Then the spirit of Lady Bertha appears suddenly, just as in Act first, standing near Torald, and the chamber is brilliant with the light that streams from her. She awakens Torald with a loving laying of her hand on his forehead. He shows no fear.

LADY BERTHA. Herman, for the second time I return to you; the first time, I came to take you away; now I come to restore you to your estate. You have justified my wishes and sur-

passed my hopes. Now, my brave, honorable Knight, you shall be acknowledged, as you are, the rightful lord of Wistgaw. In witness whereof, I show you a secret. Attend, approach.

The Lady Bertha goes to the wall to left of the balcony door, Herman following. She touches the wall, and it opens, showing a curtain hanging over the opening.

LADY BERTHA. This veil I hung here, now I remove it.

She pulls away the curtain, disclosing a great treasure of gems, and gold and silver vessels, and ingots.

LADY BERTHA. This treasure I hid here in times of war and danger. None knew it but my lord, Count Osmond, and he hath forgotten it in his age. It is yours. The wall will open for you at the name of the lovely Hilda, whom you shall wed. Receive my blessing.

She kisses Herman on the forehead, then touches the wall and it closes.

TORALD. Dear Grandmother, in the Lady Hilda you give me what you came from, heaven!

The light streaming from Lady Bertha almost ceases, but not quite, leaving her for a moment a dim vision, then that also vanishes. But the stage is quite dark only for a moment; the morning red faintly shows through the balcony doors. It grows slowly brighter. Torald goes to the great chair, falls on his knees by it for a moment, then rises and sits in it.

TORALD. Come, morning, and with it come the brighter dawn of my hopes, the dear and radiant girl, more lovely than yonder rosy east.

A Kobold emerges from the wall behind and

waves his hands around Herman, who thus is charmed to sleep. The Kobold melts into the wall. The light brightens into full morning. Soon a soft murmur and sound is heard outside, the lock is quietly turned, the doors are opened by Fritz, and Wilbold, Hilda, Knights and Ladies, enter softly. Great astonishment is manifested.

WIL. Sooth, the gallant Knight seems very much at ease. If the spirits have come they have been mighty comfortable to him. But by all those same spirits, what has become of friend Hans? Methinks it is well to rouse this sleeper and ask questions. Ho! Chevalier Torald! What news, Chevalier? Ho!

Torald opens his eyes quietly, then rises and salutes the company, with special courtly recognition of Hilda.

WIL. You must know that we are in the very suffocation of curiosity, Chevalier.

HER. As to what, Baron?

WIL. As to what, indeed? Sooth everything. How came you hither? What has happened? And where is the Chevalier Hans?

HER. I was brought hither by our friends, the Kobolds, the Lady Bertha has come to me and made much revelation, and as to the Chevalier Hans I know nothing. He was not here when I came.

WIL. Body o' me, have they spirited away my old crony?

HILDA. My lord and father, mayhaps I can explain.

WIL. Ha! You?

HILDA. Whether in the body or out of the body,

I know not, whether in dream or in action, I came hither last night and saw the Chevalier Hans do battle with the King of the Kobolds, the Chevalier using his sword and the king his whip.

WIL. How! A whip? Fight Hans with a whip?

HILDA. 'Twas a whip having a handle of the clearest and most shining ivory and five lashes of gold chains, each tipped with a large diamond; and I heard the King's jester tell the Chevalier Hans that the diamonds would cut through his armor as it were so much paste, and torment his flesh horribly. And so it was. With that whip the King so belabored the Chevalier that presently he let go his sword and ran about the room, up and down, over the furniture, howling monstrously, till he fell on his knees begging mercy. Then the Kobolds, making very merry over him, stripped off his armor, and dressed him like an old woman, even to a cap on his head tied under his chin; and they put a distaff and spindle in his girdle. Then I heard the King command his servants to bring the Chevalier Torald hither, from which, finding him here as we have, methinks that possibly these things were no dream but done in act, and I too was led hither by the Kobolds. But first the sprites set Hans in a chair and charmed him asleep and drew yonder screen around him.

WIL. What say you? The screen? Fritz, remove it.

Fritz pulls away the screen, disclosing Hans asleep in the chair. They all stare silently a moment, then look at each other, then break into merry laughter. Whereat Hans awakes.

WIL. By the towers of all of us, friend Hans, you have invented a merry sport.

HANS. It seems a little odd, Baron—

WIL. Troth, yes, monstrous odd—

HANS. But it worked well. I have done the deed and claim the Lady Hilda.

WIL. The deed?

HANS. Met the spirit of the Lady Bertha and laid it forever.

WIL. But this dress!

HANS. Ah! there's a shrewd bit of wit. The ghost being a woman methought this attire suitable, and this distaff and spindle the best weapons to meet her with.

WIL. Well, something in that. But how came you by this toggery—I left you well locked in?

HANS. I had it under my armor.

WIL. But where is your armor, Chevalier?

Hans looks about helplessly and foolishly.

WIL. My daughter here says she saw the Kobolds strip you of your iron, putting this cloth on you, and beheld you brought to begging by a whip. Stand forth Hilda.

Hilda, who has been withdrawn and hidden among the ladies since Hans awoke, now appears in front.

WIL. What say you?

HILDA. My dear father, 'tis true. But what will

you with the Chevalier? You, and all these true knights and ladies are too chivalrous, and gentle to prick a fallen man with sword or wit.

WIL. Sooth, something in that, Chevalier, something in that. Methinks, Chevalier, you will be pleased now to change your attire.

Exit Hans, crestfallen.

WIL. Now, Hilda, say what befell Sir Torald, and how he came hither.

HILDA. My father, I saw him not. After witnessing the ill-luck of Sir Hans, I fell asleep, and when I awoke in the red dawn I was kneeling at my chamber casement.

A noise outside as of shouts, hooting and jeering.

WIL. The children of the village baiting Sir Hans. I fear they will pelt him well.

Enters a servant hastily.

SERV. My lord Baron, all the children of the village and many folk in a great rabble are chasing the Chevalier Hans, or one who looks like him, dressed like an old woman, heading him off and turning him about, pelting him with clods, sticks and stones.

HILDA. Go quickly and ask the people to let Sir Hans alone, for my sake.

Exit servant.

WIL. Sooth, I think he gets no more than his bargain.

HILDA. Who dares pray for his own deserts?

WIL. Well, something in that. Now, Sir Torald?

HER. My lord Baron, what I have to tell is like gold, a small heap, but weighty. The Lady Bertha of Wistgaw, my grandmother, came back from heaven, took me, a child, from my cradle and gave me to the Kobolds to rear.

WIL. What? What? Sir Torald, is your name Herman?

HER. It is, my lord.

WIL. You are the child Herman that disappeared?

HER. I am, my lord Baron. 'Tis but now that I have returned to live with men. Last night the Kobolds brought me hither through the air, snatching me from the bare height of the hill where I was watching with love the window of the Lady Hilda. The Lady Bertha came to me here, blessed me, said I should be acknowledged the rightful lord of Wistgaw, and in proof thereof gave me power to open with a charmed word the wall yonder, where lies hidden a great treasure. This to be true I do engage my honor; and the Honey-Broth is promised, and the spirits of the castle will trouble you no more.

WIL. Let me see the wall open, Chevalier.

HER. The charmed word is the name of your daughter, uttered by me. Behold!

Herman goes to the wall, touches it, says, "Hilda," and the wall opens as before, disclosing the treasure.

WIL. By all the good ghosts in heaven, kinsman. I bear you no grudge for your return. Wistgaw is yours, and welcome.

HER. And—for your lovely daughter, Baron.

WIL. Troth, she is yours, too, by my knightly word.

Fritz approaches, trembling with fervent loyalty and eagerness, and peers into Herman's face.

FRITZ. May an old servant look closely?

HER. Honest Fritz, I know your place and your worth.

FRITZ. What my old heart hath weened, mine eyes behold

With youth-retrieving sight! Blest lineaments!
Blest Nature, that doth hold congenial lines,
Chiseling frame and face from antique models,
Childing the forebears with their daughter's
girl,

Or making them twice the parents of a son!
You dear memorial of Lady Bertha,
Eke of the noble Osmond framed in her,
Gold potency gold framed, I see them both
In your fair countenance, by them know you—
Your ancestry is writ from brow to chin.
Oh, my young master, dear, most dear young
master,

My old heart's like a populous loyalty
That hails you to recovered coronation.
Now let thy servant, lord, depart in peace
In thine own time! Mine eyes have seen thy
glory!

HER. O good old servant, live, live long, for us,
Honored and trusted as your virtue claims.

FRITZ. Ay, ay! for you. You say for *us*. For whom?

HER. Sooth, yes, you're shrewdly right, my honest
Fritz;

Now must I speak unto the Lady Hilda
In humble wooing what you I spake in hope.
Most dear and lovely lady, if your father's
Paternal right giveth me right in you,
Now do I reinstate you in that right;
Being given you, I give you back to you,
And with yourself endow you. Both are free,
You to bestow your treasury of love
As your heart wills, and I to woo. I ne'er
Were free to woo any but a free lady.
Now, lovely queen, queen of yourself, and
queen
Of loveliness, shall I have leave to woo?
Answer from a free heart.

HILDA. Alas! Sir Knight,
You give me freedom, yet I am not free—
I am no longer powered to grant that warrant.

HER. Is't possible? You love another! Farewell!
Madam, I go; you shall remain forever
Of Wistgaw mistress.

HILDA. Honorable knight,
Vouchsafe me first with you a private word.
Exeunt, with show of great respect,
Wilbold and all the Knights and Ladies.

HILDA. The aged count liveth in my concern—
This whirl of dear events hath snatched me
from him—
Yet must he this new day have crept abroad—
Find him, good Fritz—come tell me of him
soon.
Exit Fritz.

HILDA. Now must I speak, with maiden hesitation,
Dear gentle knight, and yet with simple truth
That should, methinks, brook not to falter or
fear.

Have you forgotten, dear my lord, that night
When we together were i' the Kobolds' cave,
And danced?

HER. Not I. Did not you think it a dream?

HILDA. I did, and yet did not. It grew too sweet
To be unreal. Your dear memorial ways
With all your manful care and tenderness
Became a wooing, and I was wooed and won
In precious reveries, exploring love.
Then when you entered at the banquet hall,
I knew you instantly, with you all love,
And love was life, and life was love, my lord.
Behold, dear knight, behold now why I said
I was no longer powered to grant a warrant
To woo me, being already wooed—and won.

HER. O joy! May't not be heaven, though 'tis
not foreign?

To what can I compare you, my sweet love,
To what compare you, or how can I name you,
Since all words veil their faces? Light's too
harsh,

The air too wayward, water is too dim;
Naught but the sweetness and significance
Of Nature's total rondure tallies with you,
Blue firmanent and green reflective earth
And all that's fair, soft, vocal, flourished be-
tween.

Sweet lady, you see me as I am, a man

Untaught to woo, unchartered to't before,
Unchartered eke with offerings save myself;
For I would hack my soul from the immortals
Ere point a question at these lands—thine,
thine!

In family I am but as thyself,
No less illustrious, but yet no more;
In naught am rich above thee, in naught equal
Save love and kin, one mine, the other ours;
And for what's mine, my love to thee, in that
Challenge I dare e'en thee better to love,
Belike as well, since thou art worthier loved.
Dear love, you prove earth may build heaven.
And so

My sweet, mine own, beloved and thrice be-
loved,

And thrice that thrice, lady, by your leave.

The betrothal kiss.

HER. Ah! let me hear your voice music my name.

HILDA. Is not Herman hard to pronounce, my
lord?

HER. Ay, so it is, as difficult as—Hilda:
Yet you did very well; try soon again.

HILDA. Ah, me! if you so sweetly speak my name
When I say yours, I'll utter yours all day.

Enters Fritz.

FRITZ. My lady, the count comes, and following
him are Rollo and Grun, perplexed and
troubled, striving with him to no effect.

Enter Count Osmond, Rollo and Grun. The
old Count is very vacant and dim in face and
manner.

ROLLO. Indeed, my lady, we did all we could to

wile him about the park and keep him outdoors ;
but he seemed smitten with a sudden will to
come hither and we could not persuade him.

GRUN. My lady, he seemed not even to hear what
we said, and we dared not put hands to him,
though we feared he should not come to this
room and the things here on this day of days.

HILDA. My Herman, I perceive some difference,
some change in your dear aged grandfather.

GRUN. 'Tis true, my lady ; he was abroad with the
first ray of dawn, very restless and would not
be stayed, and seemed weaker and waning, and
babbled strangely.

Hilda at once goes to the old Count and de-
votes herself to him.

COUNT O. My angel—yes, the same—mine!
Where have you been? Was it so hard to get
out of heaven to-day?

HILDA. 'Tis never hard to come to you.

COUNT O. I could not find you.

HILDA. Now you have found me.

COUNT O. Yes, yes.

The old Count moves about, very weakly and
restlessly, Hilda keeping close to him, the oth-
ers grouping according to his movements. Sud-
denly he sees the open wall and the treasure.
He stops and stares, seems struck or shocked
with memory, trembles, then grows firmer and
stronger, and knows Hilda.

COUNT O. Hilda! Little Hilda! Never far or
long from the old man. Yonder? I had for-
gotten—have not thought—but I remember it—

something buzzes in my old head—we put it there.

HILDA. You, dear grandsire?

COUNT O. I and my lady, my Bertha—for Herman—I have not thought for a long time, but I remember now—she took Herman away—but he will come again. I am to see him—'twas certain I should see him!

HILDA. Such memory returns at the extreme hour. I fear our dear grandsire verges to the bar, my Herman.

HER. I think so, my Hilda.

HILDA. Good Fritz, go call my father.

Exit Fritz.

Hilda leads the aged Count tenderly to the great chair. He talks as he goes, stopping to speak:

COUNT O. Hilda, my little Hilda, so much light in my old head suddenly. Good, good! All these visions, memories—the old things come back as if new things, and new things mix with the old things.

He has come to the chair and sits. Rollo and Grun are at side and back. Hilda, at side, signs to Herman, who comes and kneels to the old man at the other side. The spirit of Lady Bertha suddenly appears in the balcony, robed in luminous white, and she opens the glass doors and enters, invisible to them all, carrying a wreath of laurel. Enter Wilbold and Fritz, grouping with the others. The old Count suddenly takes note of Herman, bends forward and gazes into his face.

COUNT O. I know you. Memory, memory, memory, how it flames! What a light I am in—and it grows brighter. You are Herman—I see

your grandmother, my Lady Bertha, in your face.

HER. Yes, dear Grandfather, I am Herman.

COUNT O. Good, good! I knew you would come —I used to say so—but I forgot—long ago—is it *very* long since I forgot?—*very* long?

HILDA. No, dear grandsire.

Count Osmond looks several times at Herman and Hilda, from one to the other.

COUNT O. Brave boy! dear girl! gallant young knight! fair young maid!

HILDA. We are to wed, dear grandsire.

COUNT O. Better, better, and better, and best.

Lady Bertha has crowned with the laurel wreath the old Count, and then stands by Herman. All look with astonishment on the wreath.

WIL. Mark you that?

FRITZ. Ay, my lord.

WIL. How comes the wreath upon him out of the air, as dew falls?

FRITZ. I know not what to say. There be good spirits in the castle.

Count Osmond sees Lady Bertha, starts, looks with all his soul, trembles, grows strong and firm again.

COUNT O. My lady, oh my lady, my Bertha!

HER. Doth he wander again?

HILDA. Nay, I know not.

WIL. He thinks he sees the Lady Bertha.

HILDA. Who knows he sees her not? He is on the brink, may he not look over?

Lady Bertha holds out her arms to him. He smiles joyously, lays back his head on the chair peacefully, closes his eyes, and is gone. Long tableau, and music.

CURTAIN.

LB Mr '12

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

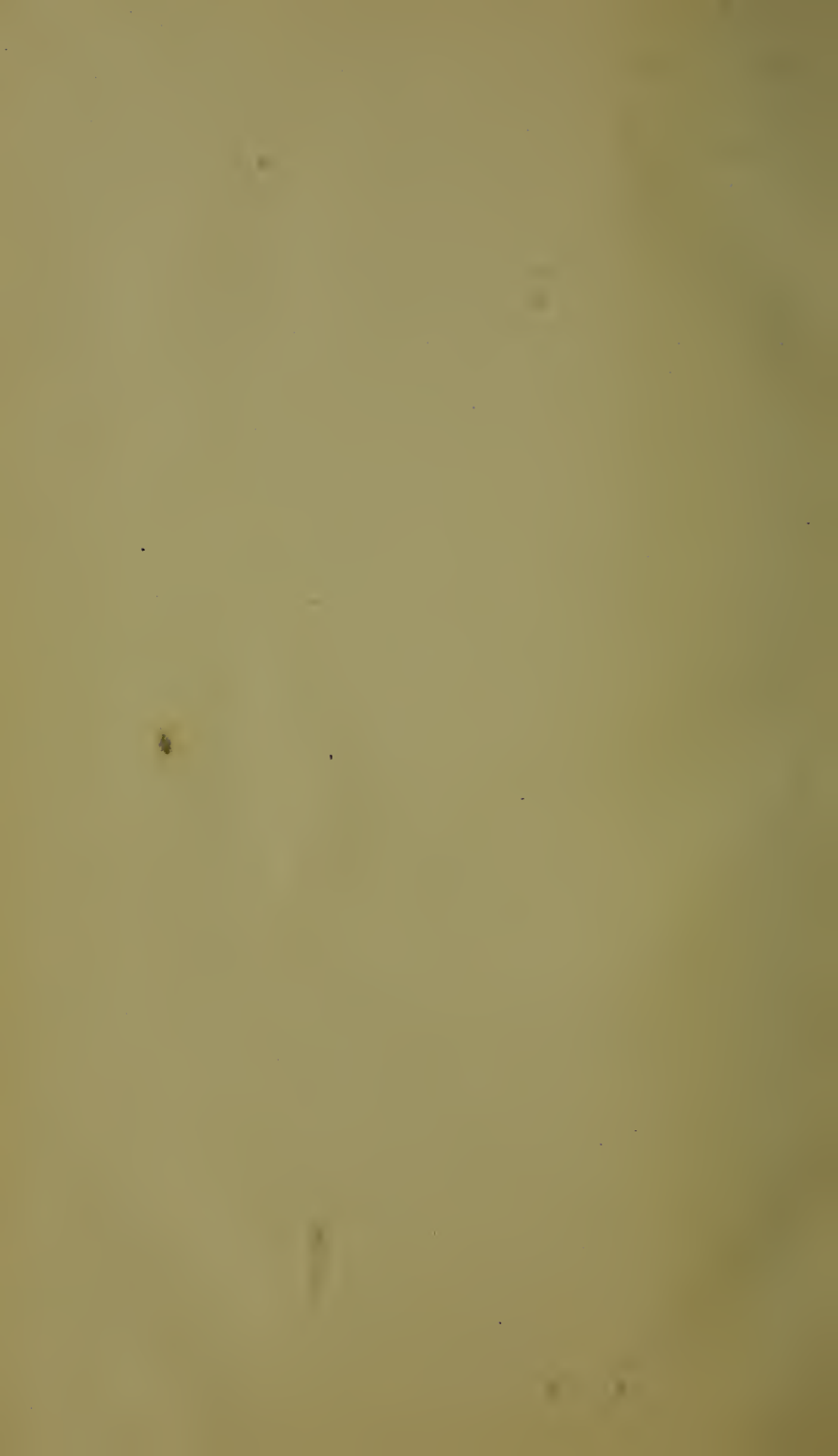
THE

LADY BERTHA'S

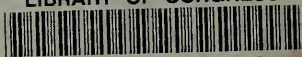
HONEY-BROTH

By JAMES VILA BLAKE





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 016 115 708 9